

Pirjo Annila

## **Film Costumes as Icons**

Three representations of a hero's iconic film costume

*...If clothes make the man, then certainly the costume designer makes the actor! The costume designer is not only essential (but) is vital, for it is they who create the look of the character without which no performance can succeed. Theirs is a monumental job, for they must be not only artists, but technicians, researchers and historians! I am happy to honor these tireless, talented men and women who I have always been inspired by and have so much depended on!*

- Audrey Hepburn -

The author has done all the translations of this thesis.

## SUMMARY

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#### Summary:

The objective of the study was to examine the definition of the concept of icon in the context of film costumes. The study focused on the spectator's point of view. Key terms provided the theoretical point of view of my thesis. The aim was to explain the concept of icon by analyzing three costumes and compare results to semiotic Juri Lotman's concept of icon and describe the relationship between them.

This thesis is a qualitative study that provided a deeper theoretical knowledge of the concept of icon. Main source of evidence was the analysis of the three film costumes from the feature *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks. Cinema's sartorial trendsetters and their signature outfits* from the TotalFilm.com –website. The criteria of genre, sex and release date of the film defined the choosing of the costumes. The analysis was conducted by adapting two analyzing methods of Roland Barthes: *The Five Codes* and *Rhetoric of the image*. They are methods of qualitative content analysis of an image. The main purpose of the study was to link Lotman's theoretical point of view with the analysis of three film costumes.

Findings of the study showed that it is possible to find the iconic aspects of the film costume from semiotic point of view. The iconicity of the film costume is its ability to change the character's garments into meaningful and important signs for a spectator. The sign language of film costume is open for the spectator because it is understandable in his culture.

Keywords: costume design, icon, semiotics, film, representation, film character

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# 1 Introduction

The costumes of blockbuster films, cult films and classic films affect the fashion business and ordinary film spectators. Fashion designers are inspired by films and filter ideas in their collections from them. They make also co-operation with film industries, like Jean-Paul Gaultier *La mala educación* (2004)<sup>1</sup> or Tom Ford *Quantum of Solace* (2008)<sup>2</sup> have designed costumes for films. Spectators can also pick elements from films into their style, which fit in the trend of time. On the contrary films portraying the present time work as an artistic mirror by telling something about the fashion of our time. Costumes seen on films have therefore considerable influence to social culture and some film costumes acquire status of *iconic*.

This thesis examines the issue of how the concept of icon is seen in the area of film costumes. The ways the film characters are dressed have fascinated me since my childhood. During my studies of clothing design I have focused more on the hidden allusions and information that film costumes provide me as a spectator. This research is based on this fascination and focuses on the sign language of film costumes. In my bachelor's thesis I studied the concept of *style* and how the clothing designer defined it in his work. I continue the theme of defining a central concept of clothing and costume design in my master thesis.

A spectator can associate specific garment or full costume as an image, like when a man wears tuxedo and feels himself in it like a James Bond. It could be that the tuxedo of James Bond has become iconic from his point of view. Spectators' knowledge of film costumes is in the centre of this research. It is important to understand the effects that the recognisable film costumes have on spectators and how they can support the success of characters, actors and films. Costume designers can utilize perspectives found from this research in their work. It can give information of what importance an iconic film costume can give to the popularity of film. It is also a sign of professionalism to know how to use key terms and concepts in one's work.

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<sup>1</sup> La mala educación 2004

<sup>2</sup> Quantum of Solace 2008

This research is semiotic-representational where the emphasis is on the signs that spectators receive from film costumes, which they then interpret and after give iconic value to certain ones. I use as a data the feature *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks. Cinema's sartorial trendsetters and their signature outfits* from the website TotalFilm.com<sup>3</sup>, which is professionalised in cinema. I have chosen three characters from the feature, which I then analyse by using Roland Barthes *Five codes* and *Rhetoric of an Image*. I then compare these findings to the definition of icon by the semiotic Juri Lotman, who has studied film as a sign language.

Church Gibson criticises the lack of appreciation of film costume research as an area of serious academic study. She sees that study of costume has competed with the same hardships as the study of fashion: underestimation and suspiciousness. Church Gibson refers to fashion historian Valerie Steele who has said that fashion is considered to be sexist, material and bourgeois and therefore not respected. The other difficulty in Steele's opinion is when the film costume can't be seen as a unified subject in the cinema, like when *haute couture* is involved in creation of film or when in low budget films costumes are more sourced than designed.

The serious academic studies are the only way in Gibson's opinion to get appreciation to the film costumes as a professional work: *The fact that fashion journalists frequently fill their pages with photographs of their favourite cinematic icons, often accompanied by text that verges on the hagiographic, does not help to establish the study of film costume as legitimate field of academic discourse.*<sup>4</sup> The last sentence is an example where a film costume is praised for its beauty but not as a complex artistic expression and as a result of high professionalism. Because the study of film costumes doesn't have own theories, I modify theories from semiotics and representation to have an answer to my research question and to find new aspects to costume design.

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<sup>3</sup> TotalFilm.com

<sup>4</sup> Church Gibson 1998, 36

## 2 Aim of the research

There has been talk about iconic film costumes in the media about films, but in the discussions it is not defined what icon precisely means in them. Aim of this thesis is to find the elements with which the iconic film costume can be defined.

My research question is *what does an icon in a film costume mean?*

To clarify the main question I have formulated three secondary questions:

- *What is the interrelationship between a costume and a character looked from the point of view of the spectator?*
- *Which elements make a film costume iconic?*
- *Can a pattern be found between iconic film costumes?*

This research is qualitative where my aim is to understand the concept of icon in the area of film costumes. I approach the issue from phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective, where an experience of a spectator and understanding of the phenomenon of icon in the context of film costumes are in the centre. Aaltola and Valli consider concept of human in phenomenology to be based on how the humans are in contact with each other and how they build reality around themselves through their experience. This experience is based on bodily action and observation. Experienced things are then learnt and structured.<sup>5</sup> The phenomenological emphasis in this research is on the spectator's experience of film costumes and how it is shifted to the notion of iconic among the people of same culture. This approach considers the reality we see to be experiential. It has an intention, which means that everything has a meaning. Everything we see we perceive through our previous experiences, interests, beliefs and aims. To analyse these meanings through experience is in the centre of phenomenology.<sup>6</sup> In a hermeneutic sense I want to understand these different interpretations as Aaltola and Valli says: *make already known to knowledge*. Bring matters that our routines have made look like self-explanatory or unnoticeable to more conscious and visible.<sup>7</sup> Concept of icon is used freely in the discussions, but I want understand it more deeply in this context.

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<sup>5</sup> Aaltola & Valli 2010, 28-29

<sup>6</sup> Aaltola & Valli 2010, 29

<sup>7</sup> Aaltola & Valli 2010, 31

Costume Design of the film is a complex process between director, actor, costume designer and other professionals of film industry. Costumes are in deep context with the release date of film and the cultural environment of that time. A spectator doesn't know the process of film production so I emphasize my research to humanistic point of view of how the character and especially the costume, lives on after the release of film among the spectators. Iconic film costume is in relation with the film, character, actor and the experience of the spectator. This research is theoretical where I try to describe the concept and how it connects with the scholars of semiotics who define icon in more philosophical sense. The research is done from the spectator's perspective and therefore my researcher's position is as a spectator, analyser and a professional of clothing design.

*Beauty is in the eye of the beholder* is a saying that could be applied in this research. A definition of what is iconic can be personal. Spectator's decisions and reasons of which film costumes are iconic are subjective and therefore generalizations are difficult. Nevertheless I consider the film costume as a paradigm: a way of viewing reality for the public that shares the same mix of values, assumptions and concepts. This research is qualitative because it seeks to open the meaning that the social-cultural environment has given to the one concept.

In the area of film studies there are academic studies about popular characters, costume designs, film stars and messages of costumes. Nevertheless there are no direct studies about the iconic value of a film costume. Stella Bruzzi has studied in her book *Undressing Cinema* (1997) film costumes from the viewpoints of projective relation of the cinema and fashion as well as the appearance of masculinity and femininity in the films through construction of sex by the costume.<sup>8</sup> Her study is multiplicinary and she links film costume outside the traditional film research to the theories like *Fashion system* (1983)<sup>9</sup> of Roland Barthes and psychoanalysis. Bruzzi's statement in her research is that costumes are images, which can work as independent significations without entirely relying on the character, body or narrative. Costumes are not only functional but also work as metaphors.<sup>10</sup> I am going to study if an iconic

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<sup>8</sup> Bruzzi 1997

<sup>9</sup> Barthes 1983

<sup>10</sup> Bruzzi 1997, xvi- xix



film costume can therefore signify also alone, even though it is in deep context with the whole appearance of a character.

Richard Dyer has studied film stars and the definition of a star in his book *Stars* (1998), where an appearance of a character is a part of star image.<sup>11</sup> In Dyer's opinion to characterize stardom is difficult, because it is a synthesis of a real actor, shaped actor image and his artificial persona constructed from his film characters. Increasing production and consumption of films in the early days of the cinema has been the cause of stardom.<sup>12</sup> Dyer sees stars as representations of people like their characters are: *stardom is an image of the way stars live.*<sup>13</sup> Stars represent certain accepted social types of the society and with this artificial persona they promote their films and their own publicity.<sup>14</sup> Dyer studies stars also as semiotic signs. A star as a sign is a complex mix of his character and star persona seen in a film at the same time.<sup>15</sup> Known film character can be strongly based on the star cult and therefore the costume of the character can also relate to it. Did the costume help the actor to become a star or did the star help the film costume to become iconic is a tricky question. Star image is an important part of the film costume but to study the connection between the star and costumes is a different research question, which should be studied as a whole. In this research I recognize the interrelation and take it into consideration in my analysis. My preconception nonetheless is that a spectator can recognize the character by seeing only the costume without ever seeing the film. He has got some information about the costume from the culture around him.

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<sup>11</sup> Dyer 1998

<sup>12</sup> Dyer 1998, 9 on Richard Schickel, 27

<sup>13</sup> Dyer 1998, 20, 35

<sup>14</sup> Dyer 1998, 47, 60-61

<sup>15</sup> Dyer 1998, 89

### 3 Theoretical background

In this chapter I define the theories I base my research on. A film is an audio-visual communication and a film costume is a part of it. Film costume communicates to a spectator principally visually. I see a film costume as a semiotic image not just of film, but also of certain cultural context. It conveys symbols and meanings. My data of the analysis, feature *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks. Cinema's sartorial trendsetters and their signature outfits*<sup>16</sup> is a multimodal representation that combines image and text to convey an iconic value of certain film look to a visitor of the website – a spectator.

#### 3.1 Film and film costume: part of visual culture

Films are part of our everyday visual communication and therefore film costumes are also in relation with our everyday visual culture. A film is always linked to the culture of the time when it is produced, released and viewed by a spectator. We can link film costume to the same cultural context. The research of visual culture is multiplicitary and it is divided between different sciences such as cultural studies, sociology, visual arts or film studies. Different sciences have different perspectives on the visual culture such as construction of identity, design, figurative expression or act of gaze.<sup>17</sup> In the film studies aesthetic approach to films focuses on the study of cinema as an art or films as messages. The approach to films as messages is based on the aesthetic theory of art, which includes the study of meanings.<sup>18</sup> According to Kress and Leeuwen visual communication bear meanings, which are created in the culture of one society or are part of it. They also point out that semiotic processes are similar and therefore there is harmony between visual communication and semiotics.<sup>19</sup> Hence I will use semiotics and especially Juri Lotman's semiotic concept of icon as a theoretical background to which I reflect findings from analysis.

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<sup>16</sup> Power July 31st 2012

<sup>17</sup> Seppänen 2005, 16

<sup>18</sup> Aumont, Bergala, Marie & Vernet 1997, 5-7

<sup>19</sup> Kress & Leeuwen 2006, 19

Seppänen sees that media nowadays has an effect on visual culture, because it conveys human experiences, like when we watch TV or use social networks.<sup>20</sup> This is why I consider relevant to use a professional website of films as a data, since Internet has become a big part of the film consumption. Films are essential base for the research since they are the foundation of iconic film costumes. However the way in which media in Internet classifies iconic film costumes tells something about the film audience's way of thinking.

To define visual culture Seppänen separates it into two words. He defines word visual as an adjective: *attributes seen by the eyes* and as a substantive: *reality as it is seen*. Culture in Seppänen's opinion is an *act of humans who build unconsciously or consciously their surroundings and meanings to them*. Visual culture is therefore an action that conveys meanings and it is based on eyesight.<sup>21</sup> Visual culture is the visual environment we live inside one culture and visual communication is the system how we communicate visually. How a spectator sees a film costume is subjective and the 'reality' seen in it is a part of film's similarity with the real life.

Kress and Leeuwen summarize the visual communication to be always coded and that one community uses only the semiotic systems, which are seen most important to control common understanding. When the code seems like transparent it is only because the members of one community know how to read the code.<sup>22</sup> An example could be the professionals or fans of Soviet Union films that have the knowledge to 'read' Eisenstein's montage films. For them the allegories within the film are open and the film doesn't seem uncomprehending, like it would be for other spectators. This research focuses on the western culture and Hollywood films, since the feature *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks*<sup>23</sup> lists only Hollywood films.

A film affects on two human senses: eyesight and hearing. Therefore a film is a visual and aural representation. A film is viewed from the screen and it is combined from thousands of frames that run with certain rate: *a motion picture*. The image, which

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<sup>20</sup> Seppänen 2005, 93

<sup>21</sup> Seppänen 2005, 16-17

<sup>22</sup> Kress & Leeuwen 2006, 32-34

<sup>23</sup> Power July 31st 2012

spectator sees is framed and two-dimensional – nowadays there is also 3D. According to Aumont et al.<sup>24</sup> a film can be defined with these two characteristics of visual representation. *Framing* or *onscreen space* affect the composition of what happens inside the ‘square’ that the cameraman works with. A spectator reacts to the pictures as if they were real representations of some space. At the same time the spectator knows the lack of the third dimension and that something is framed outside the image. Spectator imagines that the world of film continues outside the frames and this notion is called *out screen space*. While there is difference between *onscreen space* and *out screen space* together they are considered to be one imaginary space, *film space*.<sup>25</sup> A film costume is under the same laws. Therefore a spectator sees always a film costume as a two-dimensional and framed image, not as a real costume. Spectator is dominated by the medium of image.

### 3.2 Semiotics of film and film costume

Aumont et al. refers to Marcel Martin who has said that in the beginning, the aim of film was only to record spectacles and events of real world. *The film language* was born slowly with the development of different expressions of film, when there came a need to tell stories. This is a classical conception of language in film.<sup>26</sup> Seeing of a film as its own language connects it to the theory of semiotics. Semiotics provides concepts and analysing models to open image’s (film is a long series of images called frames) nature as a sign and as a link to the wider cultural sphere. Seppä believes that the study of images by semiotics is always a study of *representations*.<sup>27</sup> Film costume is a part of the semiotics of film, but I see that it has also semiotics of its own, when it is connected to the cultural context outside the film.

Jean Mitry has expanded the concept of film language to the linguistic-semiotic approach, where a film is an aesthetic form that uses images.<sup>28</sup> An image as a medium makes a language of its own, when put in sequence (logical or dialectic organization).

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<sup>24</sup> Aumont et al. 1997

<sup>25</sup> Aumont, et al. 1997, 9-14

<sup>26</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 136 on Martin 1977

<sup>27</sup> Seppä 2012, 128

<sup>28</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 140-141 on Mitry 1980, 53-54

Language is a system of signs and symbols for Mitry. Aumont et al.'s quote of Mitry clarifies the complexity of film as a sign system, a film language:

*Obviously a film is something very different from system of signs and symbols. At least it does not present itself exclusively as such a system. A film is first of all images, and images of something. It is a system of images whose goal is to describe, develop, and narrate an event or a sequence of various events. However, depending upon the chosen narrational strategy, these images are organized into system of signs and symbols; they become symbols or may become symbols in addition. Thus, unlike words, the images are not uniquely signs, rather they are first objects or concrete reality and as such they are objects that take on (or are given) a definite meaning. In other words, the cinema becomes language in that it is first a representation, but becomes meaningful under cover of these same representations. Film is, if you will, a language in the second degree.<sup>29</sup>*

Film balances between reflecting our reality and creating reality of its own. It is representing and creating objects and ideas at the same time. Therefore Mitry's *language of second degree* can be summarised to the level when a film as images goes to the semiotics of symbolization. A film appears to be a special art form that balances between the audiences need for reality and need for imagination. The language of film is therefore complex and has multiple layers of representing, as well as the language of film costumes. Lotman opens little bit of film costume as a part of film's language: sign in film can be separated from its material meaning with framing, where a close-up from the costume's detail can change it to a metaphor. The other often-used method is repetition where repeating of the same object within the film creates the *rhythmic line*: the sign of an object starts to separate from the obvious target of meaning, when it starts to highlight abstract, logical and associate meanings.<sup>30</sup>

Semiotics divides usually language into linguistic signs and visual signs. Terminology of semiotics is mostly based on Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics of linguistics. It focuses on linguistic signification where he uses key terms *signifier* and *signified*. In a

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<sup>29</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 140-141 on Mitry 1980, 53-54

<sup>30</sup> Lotman 1989, 51

language a word can have two meanings. *Signifier* is when the word is spoken or written. The mental meaning *signified* is when the written or spoken word is added with a mental image, such as when a person writes the word *tree* and thinks about the birch tree. So the word *tree* can have different mental images depending on the person who interprets it. The sign combines the concept *signified* and its material image *signifier*. Saussure's semiotics is called *structural semiotics*.<sup>31</sup> The image can also be divided into the appearance (*signifier*) and the meaning (*signified*). Meanings of the image are complex and in a way 'endless', because they are not limited like the words in the sentence.

Aumont et al. refers to Saussure by saying that in linguistics, between the concept *signified* and its material image *signifier* is a referent to which the concept and material image refers. Referent is considered not as an individual object, but as an abstract category: multiple samples of the same object. An image of a cat in a film is used as an example by saying that the cat's iconic appearance (*signifier*) and the concept cat (*signified*) do not refer to one certain cat, but the whole category of cats (real, written, painted, photographed, spoken...). This *schematization* is part of the process of classification, where recognized objects are classified to a category (cats) and then seen as a concept (a cat). Aumont et al. consider film to have a higher degree of iconicity than a television image because of its conceptuality of visual image that the spectator sees. A film therefore can be considered as a system of iconic representation where the function of images is to refer and at the same time make them as new narratives of a story with its own meaning.<sup>32</sup> A cat seen in the TV reality series is a cat of reality, but in film the cat has a high level of iconicity. It is a concept *a cat*, representing all cats.<sup>33</sup> Put into the issue of film costumes, an iconic film costume could be seen representing wider category of something from films or cultural context outside of them. Icon is classification and creation of a concept.

Other main influencer of semiotics is Charles Sanders Peirce. Peirce's semiotic is called pragmatic and it focuses on the use of signs in everyday life.<sup>34</sup> Sign by Peirce is

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<sup>31</sup> Seppänen 2005, 107-110 on Saussure 1966, 65-67

<sup>32</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 151, 123

<sup>33</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 152-153

<sup>34</sup> Seppänen 2005, 110

an object, which represents the other. It has a material quality by the real physical connection with the thing it signifies.<sup>35</sup> The sign represents something to the person, who then creates a mental image about it. The mental image is called *interpretant* (Saussure uses the concept signified) and the matter the sign represents is called *object* (Saussure's signifier).<sup>36</sup> Peirce gives an example, where portrait has a likeness to the person it is representing, so it is a sign of this person. This connection is indirect because the painting has an impression that the painter has had when he did the painting. Sign has a material context of objects but also a demonstrative one, when a sign can represent some idea. Idea can be considered as an object and therefore sign can represent it.<sup>37</sup> An image of film costume is connected with the medium of photography or motion picture, but at the same time it demonstrates some ideas that one wants to convey. The main theorems of Peirce's pragmatic semiotic are well summarized by Kunelius:

(i) *Interpretation is an on going process*

(ii) *The interpretations are born in customs that the social action has created and in their contexts*

(iii) *Meanings and interprets of the reality are communal*

(iv) *In the end the meanings are connected with practises and actions in reality, they cannot be totally contractual.*<sup>38</sup> So even if the opinion of what is iconic film costume is subjective we can see from (iii) that there is the communal aspect that affects the subjective one. I consider these theorems to be the base of this research, because they reveal the conflict between communal and subjective way of thinking what is an iconic film costume.

In all films, realistic or fictional, objects are only representing their categories, their referents. Aumont et al. call this system as *the iconic system of representation*. In films there are varying degrees of reference from general to more complex. They depend upon the information and personal knowledge the spectator has against the image he sees. They give an example of 1930's gangster movies in which the referent is not the real world of 30's, but the world the audience imagines from the

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<sup>35</sup> Peirce 1991, 141

<sup>36</sup> Peirce 1991, 239

<sup>37</sup> Peirce 1991, 141-142

<sup>38</sup> Kunelius 2003, 171

information they have got from articles, novels and films.<sup>39</sup> This means the wide cultural context that has given information to the spectator and has prepared him to interpret film. Fictional film works with the power of referent, when its story is connected to the certain era of history with which it can make its fiction to look like realistic.<sup>40</sup> No matter how real a film looks like, it creates the world of its own.

Visual recognition is based on the identification of noticeable traits and elimination of others. It is called *schematic representation*, where many traits of an object has been removed or simplified. Simplifying increases the relevant traits to recognize an object or on the contrary increases the degrees of resemblance, the level of *iconicity*.<sup>41</sup> It is then when the object has its *iconic* character. According to this theory in the theme of film costumes *an icon* can be seen from its perceptible traits, when the irrelevant ones have been taken off. The relevant, perceptible traits combine an icon. In a conceptual level it is a summary of external traits that tell something about its category (remember category of cats).

According to previous it could be assumed that an icon is a sign system or individual sign and it signifies something about its counterpart to the spectators. The signifying elements, which make film costumes iconic, are in the centre of this research and therefore it is done from the semiotic perspective, which focuses on the study of signs. This research focuses on the visual signification of a film costume.

### **3.3 Film and film costume as a representational systems**

Aumont et al. consider a film to be an audio-visual representation. They define visual representation in film as *film representation* that is a combination of framing and two-dimensionality. *Film representation* depends on films technical and aesthetic necessities.<sup>42</sup> Film representation is *moving representational image*. It conveys recognisable objects due to certain conventions, like the way it tells a story in fictional world, which is then materialized by the way of representation. The representation in

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<sup>39</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 79-82

<sup>40</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 82, 152

<sup>41</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 151

<sup>42</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 9, 37, 109



film is not only to show objects, but what the film wants to say about them. Every object seen in film is a discourse that represents amount of values. An object is a part of new fiction or social environment that aims to create the fictional world of film around it. Film representation is therefore *a small narrative of us*.<sup>43</sup>

Film costume is this kind of small narrative or object in *film representation*, which wants to say something about our world in the way of fiction. This doesn't only mean realistic films, but all films. Objects are not only copying the objects of reality, but they want to say something about the more philosophical aspects like humanity, religion, behaviour, nature or universe. They have certain value in them. Perspective depends on what the film aims to say, what is its theme. In this thesis it is essential to find which kind of representation a film costume creates and what is it in this representation that makes it considered to be an icon in the category of film costumes.

Hall defines concept *representation* to be an essential part of process by which the meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture.<sup>44</sup> It is part of visual culture studies and it is used to analyse different medias and to connect research to theories. Representation is in context with semiotics, because it studies different sign systems, such as sign and code.<sup>45</sup> Mental representations and signs are connected with a code, which 'translates' the sign into mental representation. Code has been used when we know that in traffic lights green allows one to go and red means stop. The learned connection that the certain colour means certain thing is code.<sup>46</sup> Codes change by the time and spectators of today 'read' films differently than fifty years ago. I connect the analysis to the theory of semiotics with representation. An iconic film costume represents something. It is a representation of certain culture context – a certain value.

Seppänen sees that an image is a representation but it is also a part of wider sphere of representations.<sup>47</sup> In this study an image of iconic film costume is part of the

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<sup>43</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 68-69, 15

<sup>44</sup> Hall 1997, 15

<sup>45</sup> Seppänen 1997, 77

<sup>46</sup> Seppänen 2005, 87-89

<sup>47</sup> Seppänen 2005, 77

TotalFilm.com -website's representation and the representation of film.<sup>48</sup> This analysis approaches three iconic film costumes from *constructive* basis. Constructive representation is not interested if the representation is real or what the producer of it (in this case a film director) wanted to express. It focuses on what kind reality representation produces and how.<sup>49</sup> As we will learn in the chapter 4.6 *Film spectator* the film doesn't copy the world, but creates its own and therefore the representation of a film can be considered real.<sup>50</sup>

Hall defines representation as a process that connects meaning and language to the culture.<sup>51</sup> Representations are not only subjective; actually they are material of agreements shared in one culture. Representation is not a certain media, but a process of interpretation: someone creates a representation, which is then used and interpreted by the others.<sup>52</sup> It is clear that nowadays public follows films not only by watching them, but also following medias in contact with films and cinema. For example they follow official websites for films, from which one is used in this thesis as a data source. It is therefore possible that a spectator knows a lot about certain film and it's characters from other sources besides film. Seppänen says that mental representations can't only be personal because people are able to communicate with each other. So that they could communicate, they share their mental representations by having the same concepts in a same culture. With different sign systems people convey meanings to the others, like with language, expressions, pictures, movements or photographs. Seppänen remarks that an image is often a mix of different sign systems and therefore a part of interaction and culture. Images bear communal meanings of certain culture, period and place. Interpretation of them is learned.<sup>53</sup>

Representations are divided into two different systems according to Hall (1997).<sup>54</sup> Firstly objects and people are paired with *mental representation* where the external characteristics of an object are connected with the ideas we have about it. With them

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<sup>48</sup> TotalFilm.com

<sup>49</sup> Seppänen 2005, 95

<sup>50</sup> Lotman 1989, 12

<sup>51</sup> Hall 1997, 15

<sup>52</sup> Seppänen 2005, 82-84

<sup>53</sup> Seppänen 2005, 85-86, 89

<sup>54</sup> Hall 1997

the sensed signs of an object are analysed and arranged mentally by different kind of categorisations.<sup>55</sup> Mental representation can be explained by how a spectator recognises a film character to be a hero. It is done when the spectator connects the characters external signs with all heroes he has seen and concludes that it has the same characteristics so it must be a hero. The spectator has a mental representation of what the hero looks like. The second representation system by Hall is the sign system: *a language*. Language is considered in wider sense of semiotics as a common language, which is combined from different signs.<sup>56</sup>

Multimodal representation is when a representation is combined from several forms of expression, like an article in a newspaper is combined from text, figures and photographs.<sup>57</sup> The feature of TotalFilm.com that is used as a data in this thesis is multimodal, because it combines image, number and text.<sup>58</sup> To analyse these parts it is necessary to analyse the relation between two different representations: image and text. Seppänen sees that there is no special rule on how to study the relation of text and image. On the contrary the method should be built for each representation. Also the reader doesn't divide the text and image but sees them together as a one representation.<sup>59</sup> The visitors of the TotalFilm.com -website review texts, rankings and images together as a one mode of expression.<sup>60</sup> According to Seppänen image and text depend on each other and one of them can't build wide representation without the other. The text defines meanings for the image and vice versa.<sup>61</sup> The important aspect for analysing the film costume is to analyse the interplay of the photo and text, which defines together the iconic aspects.

### 3.4 Icon

I want to open the concept of an icon for me and for the audience starting with the encyclopaedia, since the foundations of this research has been the problem of how

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<sup>55</sup> Hall 1997, 17-18

<sup>56</sup> Seppänen 2005, 85-86

<sup>57</sup> Seppänen 2005, 90

<sup>58</sup> TotalFilm.com

<sup>59</sup> Seppänen 2005, 79

<sup>60</sup> TotalFilm.com

<sup>61</sup> Seppänen 2005, 79-80, 91

people define certain terms. *The New Penguin English Dictionary* (2000) defines an icon: *a religious image, e.g. of Christ, the Virgin Mary, or a saint, typically painted on a small wooden panel and used as an aid to devotion in the Eastern Orthodox churches. 2 a pictorial representation; an image or symbol. 3 somebody who is an object of uncritical devotion; an idol.* --<sup>62</sup>

*Suuri sivistyssanakirja* defines *ikoni* (icon in Finnish) originally to be an image, portrait or representative image. In general an icon is a symbol, insignia, or characteristic, indicative or signifying image, expression. In the area of semiotics it defines that icon is a sign, which is not contractual but looks like the act it is meant for, like many of the traffic signs.<sup>63</sup> Its definition of a semiotic icon is not enough extensive and it will be opened later more.

Honour & Fleming's *A world history of art* (2005) reveals the art history of an icon, where it is mostly connected with the religious icon art of the Orthodox Church. Yet it originates from the Byzantine Church of sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>64</sup> The icon normally represents the Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Child or the Saints, sometimes with angels. They are normally painted on a wooden panel decorated with gold or mosaic. The picture of a religious icon is composed hierarchically and the characters usually look straight to the viewer as if inviting to be face-to-face with the holy person. Icons are appreciated as holy as Christian relics. Icons were originally demanded for an aid for praying or to be an image of adoration. They appealed to the religious public more than the symbols and allegories of early Christian art.<sup>65</sup> Remarkable detail in the Christian icons is the saint's golden halo, which represents the holiness of a figure as a visual metaphor. Christian icons are substitutes of holy persons and with them a prayer can be connected with the immaterial spirit through material art.

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<sup>62</sup> Allen 2000, icon

<sup>63</sup> Valpola 2000, Ikoni

<sup>64</sup> Honour & Fleming 2005

<sup>65</sup> Honour & Fleming 2005, 315-316

Icon in semiotics means that the sign reminds somehow the object it is representing. It has detectable similarity.<sup>66</sup> Visual signs that are called iconic signs bear certain resemblance to the object to which they refer.<sup>67</sup> In this case a photograph can be considered as an icon of reality because it represents it. Seppänen tells that because of it, a photograph is often considered to be a measurement of an icon. However photograph's reality should be measured with the other photographs and the realism build by them, not by how much the photograph represents the object. Seppänen gives an example where a customs officer compares the passport photo not only to its owner but also to the standard of passport photos. The standard is more important than the reality how the photo represents its owner.<sup>68</sup> It will try to see if there is also a standard in the area of film costumes in which the iconic film costumes can be reflected.

Iconic signs differ from the others because they have higher comprehensibility, when they look natural and understandable, says Anttila. Receiver's perception of the similarity and analysis can produce an icon. It is produced by the mental experience, but similarity alone is not enough to be the base of iconic reference. Just an object can't be an icon of other similar object, but its duplicate.<sup>69</sup> An icon is more complex mental process of sign language than just a reference of similarity. In fact Seppä states that scholars of semiotics agree that there is no perfect iconic sign. An image can't 'talk' without the fact that the reader has learned the cultural process of how to read it. Customary ways of reading iconic signs has just made many images look like iconic ones.<sup>70</sup>

Peirce divides sign into *icon*, *index* and *symbol*. An *icon* is a sign, which has the character of an object it is representing. He gives an example where a line made by pencil represents some geometrical line and is iconic sign of it. An *index* instead has to be in context with the object it is representing or it loses the character as a sign. Like a bullet hole is a sign of a bullet and there would not be a hole without it. A

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<sup>66</sup> Mikkonen 2005, 21

<sup>67</sup> Hall 1997, 20

<sup>68</sup> Seppänen 2005, 130-132

<sup>69</sup> Anttila, 2007

<sup>70</sup> Seppä 2012, 141

*symbol* needs an interpretant so that the sign's character could work.<sup>71</sup> In Peirce's iconic representation there is a resemblance between the *signifier* and *signified*.<sup>72</sup> Like symbols used at the airport to guide travellers, need travellers to interpret them and understand. According to the definitions an icon could be summarized so that it resembles the object, category or cultural context it is representing. It is not the object itself, but the portrayal of the value that it has. It is a representation of something. According to Peirce an *icon* is a sign that has the characters of the real or ideal object.<sup>73</sup> Iconic sign signifiers by its own characteristics in other words by representing the object it stands for. The iconic relation is when the object is based on similarity or metaphorical connection.<sup>74</sup>

### 3.5 Icon: the concept of Juri Lotman

Semiotic Juri Lotman has studied film as its own language in *Merkkien maailma - kirjoitelmia semiotiikasta* (1989).<sup>75</sup> I use Lotman's theory as a basis of one definition of icon. I use Lotman's theory as a theoretical mirror to which I reflect findings from the analysis. As a result I can find better an explanation of what is iconic in film costumes. Lotman has described icon in close contact with his definition of film language.

To define the language of film one has to define the meaning of a language. Lotman defines a language to be an organised communicative system, which guarantees the change of information. It maintains or cumulates in a society that uses it. In that case a language is a sign system. A sign is a materialised substitute of objects, phenomena and concepts in the change of information. A sign is part of a semiotic system and peculiar to it is that it always replaces something. By the act of replacing it is always in relation to the object it replaces. It is called the semantic of sign.<sup>76</sup> A sign produces always information.

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<sup>71</sup> Peirce 1991, 239-240

<sup>72</sup> Seppä 2012, 136

<sup>73</sup> Peirce 1991, 239

<sup>74</sup> Mikkonen 2005, 30 on Peirce 2001b, 11-13

<sup>75</sup> Lotman 1989

<sup>76</sup> Lotman 1989, 9-10

Lotman divides signs into two different categories: *conditional* and *descriptive*. Conditional sign means that there is no absolute connection between the meaning of sign and its form of expression. Conditional sign is an *unmotivated sign*. The most important conditional sign is word. The word means something, but it is written and spoken differently in each language. Therefore the connection can't be absolute, because certain language *codes* words and one needs to know the *code* to open them. Literary arts have developed from conditional signs and the aim of this art form is to portray something.<sup>77</sup>

SIGNS BY LOTMAN:

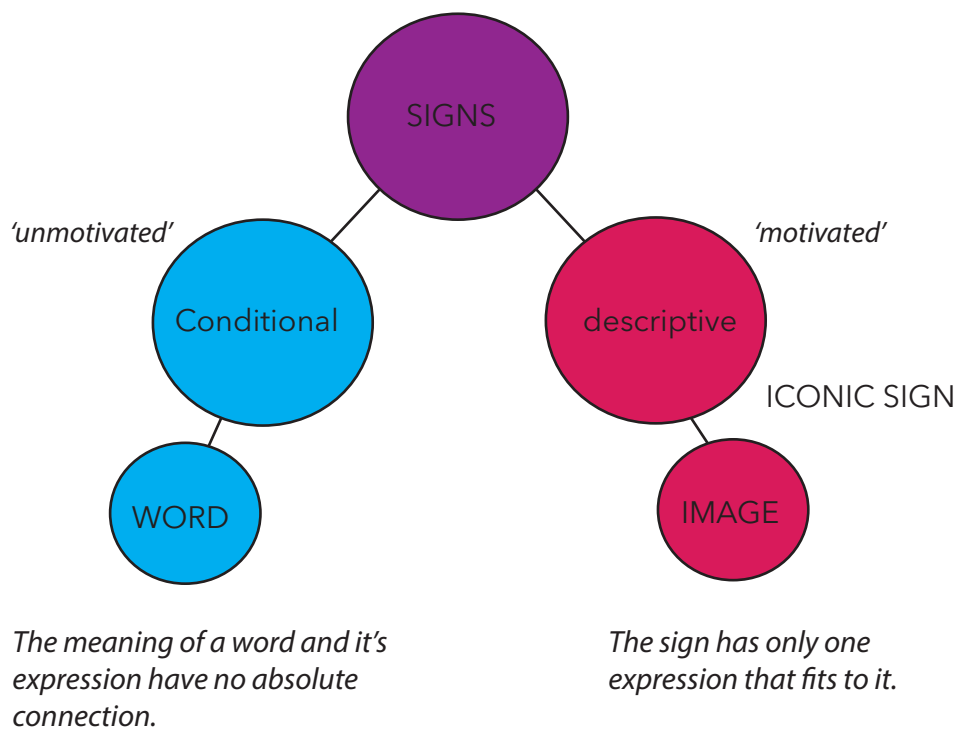


Table 1. Signs by Lotman. (Lotman 1989, 12-16, modified by Annila 2014)

Descriptive sign means an iconic sign, when only one expression fits to it. It describes some object or refers to it. Drawing and photograph are descriptive and *motivated* signs. Lotman considers a photograph to be the most perfect iconic sign. Descriptive signs are the bases for visual arts, whose aim is to portray (as with allegories or metaphors). People feel that descriptive signs are not as much signs as they feel words

<sup>77</sup> Lotman 1989, 12-16

to be, even though words and drawings are both equal signs of culture.<sup>78</sup> Seppänen defines that *motivated* sign is when object's real physical appearance is limited by the signified. The more iconic the sign is, the more it is motivated. He gives an example where a photograph of dog is more motivated sign than the word dog, because the word can't really represent the dog. The drawing of dog is more motivated than the word, because it represents the animal more, but less than the photograph. Icon and motivation are semiotic characteristics that are typical for the photograph, but they are meaningful only in relation with the production of an image and interpretation of it.<sup>79</sup> Iconic film costume is motivated when its physical appearance is limited by the techniques of filmmaking or photography. Film costume in film and in photograph has therefore more iconic value than the real garment, which the audience never sees. Limiting can also be done on purpose, like when a film uses black-and-white as an effect.

Spectators see the film costumes through motion pictures or photographs, but never the authentic ones. In a film costume the cultural context means that the costume is in relation with the time when the film is released, viewed and with the spectators who are watching it and also their cultural location (country, culture, society: western, Asian, African, Nordic...). In this analysis I have to take into consideration these things and the era the costume is representing. So even if a spectator considers images he sees as clothes, in reality he sees them only as a media of images. On the contrary to conditional sign, which need a code, iconic sign looks like natural and understandable. However a sign is readable in one culture only and difficult to understand in the different time or culture. Based on this, if a film costume is iconic, it has to be connected with some scheme of certain culture context (film characters, genre or outside of cinema) and represent it well.

A word as a conditional sign can signify one or group of objects, abstract ideas, metaphors or it can even be a metalanguage. To show the same abstraction within the images is more difficult than with the words. Iconic sign is more like a concrete of abstraction. Therefore Lotman thinks that the development of abstract language is a

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<sup>78</sup> Lotman 1989, 12-16, 46

<sup>79</sup> Seppänen 2005, 133-134



great achievement for painting and sculpture.<sup>80</sup> Iconic is some kind of abstraction of the object it is representing. Lotman opens little bit of film costume as a part of film's language: sign in film can be separated from its material meaning with framing, where a close-up from the costume's detail can change it to a metaphor. The other often-used method is repetition where the repeating of same object within the film creates the *rhythmic line*: sign of an object starts to separate from the obvious target of meaning, when it starts to highlight abstract, logical and associate meanings.<sup>81</sup>

According to Lotman film is an orientation of these two ways of telling a story: descriptive images and conditional text. In a context of film, Lotman regards text to be written text and spoken word. In the era of films these both narratives have developed equally. However he considers non-visual elements (words, music) to be less important than images in film.<sup>82</sup> These narratives and different codes are mixed in the film where they create a third meaning: *film information*. It is meaning expressed by the language of the film, which is impossible to understand outside of it. Brought to the topic of film costumes, spectators don't see costume as its own unit, but as a part of film and its means. As stated by Lotman, everything we experience and moves us from the film has a meaning. The film conveys information and therefore Lotman sees that to learn its meanings and systems is as important as it is to learn other traditions of art.<sup>83</sup>

Every image on film (sequence, frame...) is a sign, which includes information and the sign has two different meanings. Firstly it brings out real objects, which have semantic relation with the screen: objects become meanings of images on the screen, because we see only moving images, not the authentic objects. Secondly the images can have unexpected connotations: means of film, such as framing, montage or depth, can give connotations to the objects on screen, which can be metaphorical, symbolical or metonymical. As stated by Lotman, framing is the most important bearer of meanings in films.<sup>84</sup> As an example a close-up from the film costume can turn it to a

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<sup>80</sup> Lotman 1989, 31, 50

<sup>81</sup> Lotman 1989, 51

<sup>82</sup> Lotman 1989, 44-47

<sup>83</sup> Lotman 1989, 47-49

<sup>84</sup> Lotman 1989, 34-38

metaphor or symbol that is important to the story. Dorothy's red shoes in the film *Wizard of Oz* (1939)<sup>85</sup> becomes a metaphor when they are shown in the close-up. The close-up supports the meaning that they are not just everyday shoes, but equipment of magic, which is the main theme of the story.

Film is based on visual sight with which we model the visual world and adopt sign culture. Sight works differently in the non-moving visual arts than in the film. When an object changes to a visual figure by some material it becomes a sign. Firstly to receive a sign, spectator is expected to parallel the iconic figure to the suchlike objects or phenomena's of reality.<sup>86</sup> In the film *Troy* (2004)<sup>87</sup> the appearance of hero Achilles is connected to a soldier of ancient Greece by the spectator, who connects its external characteristics to the genre of Greek statues he has seen.

Secondly the iconic figure is parallel from other aspects, like focus on the technical aspects of the image. When we look a photograph, we do not only see the iconic figure, but also proportions, empty space, exposure or other technical aspects that are typical to a photograph. Therefore a photograph of film costume is not only a photograph of it, but for the sake of technical reasons, it is a different combination of elements of photographs. Due to the new combination we can parallel or separate photographs from each other.<sup>88</sup>

Thirdly we parallel seen iconic figure to itself as a different units of time.<sup>89</sup> I give an example of Scarlett O'Hara's dress made of curtains in the film *Gone with the wind* (1939).<sup>90</sup> Her dress is in context with the time of American civil war (presented in the story), beauty ideal of the year 1939 (when the film was released) and today's spectator's point of view (nostalgia). Lotman reckons that in the case mentioned before the (iconic) figure is received as a collection of distinguishing characteristics.

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<sup>85</sup> Wizard of Oz 1939

<sup>86</sup> Lotman 1989, 49

<sup>87</sup> Troy 2004

<sup>88</sup> Lotman 1989, 49-50

<sup>89</sup> Lotman 1989, 50

<sup>90</sup> Gone With the Wind 1939

The different objects are seen as variations of the same. This way of parallel is the basics of film semantics.<sup>91</sup>

Film information gets its power from breaking the expectations of a spectator. Film is based on a certain repetition of elements and the ordinary and artistic experience of a spectator: a certain system of expectations. When film breaks these expectations it separates the semantic junction from films narrative.<sup>92</sup> It changes expectation to new information. The new connection of semiotic meanings is peculiar to film. As an example for this I use the scene from the film *Maria Antoinette* (2006)<sup>93</sup> where the queen enjoys herself surrounded by an army of cakes. Maria Antoinette is claimed to have said the famous phrase when the public of France where starving: *Qu'ils mangent de la brioche, Let them eat cake*. If the spectator is not more or less familiar with the phrase, the symbolism of the scene doesn't open. Nor do a photograph of cakes help to open the symbolism. The film information comes into existence when it connects the semiotic elements together and creates a new meaning, as in the scene of Maria Antoinette. 'Learned' spectator has been exposed to the means of film and can 'read' how cakes change from food to signs. Special use of signs in film makes an iconic meaning by being a sign of a wider culture context. The meaning is coded into an object by the film information. So also the film costume is not only film information but information of culture.

Lotman considers film as art and therefore film costume is part of this art form. As stated before, art has its own language. In order to study film costume as an iconic sign I have to understand the pattern of artistic communication by which film and thus film costume communicates. Lotman's theory of artistic communication is based on the semiology of Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure sees natural language as the opposite of the artistic language. Saussure divides natural language into *language* and *speech*. Lotman compresses language from Saussure's theory to be *a system of constructional relations* and speech is *an expression of these with the means of material*.<sup>94</sup> Lotman concludes that when the certain order of language is considered to

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<sup>91</sup> Lotman 1989, 50

<sup>92</sup> Lotman 1989, 38

<sup>93</sup> Maria Antoinette 2006

<sup>94</sup> Lotman 1989, 53 on Saussure 1933

be real, so that conformity can be specified to it, it loses its unexpectedness (with unexpectedness Lotman means non-traditional). So every time when non-artistic text grows longer, it has more structural limits and therefore the information reduces and unexpectedness grows. More important aspect to non-artistic communication is that receiver focuses on the information and not to the way it is sent. This is because the sender and receiver have same code.<sup>95</sup>

The non-artistic communication is the opposite. It is unexpected because it lives in conflict: the receiver gets the information from the message and also the way it is sent. So the language of art is never unnoticeable and predictable. But there can't be communication that hasn't somehow nonconformity because it can't be sent. Therefore artistic text has conformity and nonconformity, it is predictable and unpredictable. Artistic text is always shorter than non-artistic, but it has longer information.<sup>96</sup>

One of the means of artistic communication is the collision and equation of different elements of the system. As an example of collision, Lotman describes the Czech scientist Jan Mukařovský's article of Charlie Chaplin in which the main point is that Chaplin's character and costume is dualistic and therefore unexpected. In Chaplin's costume the upper part is gentleman and the lower part is tramp style. The same dualism can be seen his character: when the situation needs the behaviour of a gentleman, Chaplin acts like a tramp and when the customs of a tramp would come in handy, he acts instead like a gentleman. The two opposite conformities to law make the character comical and create surprises. The idea that the hero is dressed in both cases to someone else confirms that the hero and his relation to the costume creates comical situation that create new meanings.<sup>97</sup> Therefore in the Charlie Chaplin films, his costume is in close contact with the character and the way the character builds artistic communication.

Lotman presents a photograph (one frame in film) to have a certain composition. Certain objects are in certain context together and create a certain relation of meaning.

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<sup>95</sup> Lotman 1989, 52-53

<sup>96</sup> Lotman 1989, 54-55

<sup>97</sup> Lotman 1989, 56-58, 62 on Mukařovský

Nevertheless the semantics of a picture is not only the sum of meanings of objects.<sup>98</sup> So film costume's semantic meaning is not either the sum of meanings of its characteristics. Different objects correspond to each other in the picture and become active medium of meanings. Their meanings can be seen by studying the connecting and dividing elements.<sup>99</sup>

Film language and interpretation of semiotic meanings is bound to culture. Film has an ability to absorb semiotics of everyday-life relations and national or social traditions. It is therefore linked closely with the life outside arts than any other art form.<sup>100</sup> Lotman condenses modern film: -- *complexity of diverse semiotic system, multiple coding of text and artistic ambiguity makes a contemporary film similar to living organism that is also an bundle of complex communication.*<sup>101</sup> Nowadays film is considered to be an art form and within it costumes work as part of its expression. Lotman indicates the objective of art not to reflect the world like a mirror, but to change its images to signs and fill them with meanings.<sup>102</sup> In my experience the function of costume is not to reflect the everyday dressing, but to bear meanings important to the story.

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<sup>98</sup> Lotman 1989, 64

<sup>99</sup> Lotman 1989, 64

<sup>100</sup> Lotman 1989, 90-91

<sup>101</sup> Lotman 1989, 96-97

<sup>102</sup> Lotman 1989, 21

## 4 Essential concepts

In this chapter I define essential concepts of this thesis. I use the word spectator to describe the person who watch films and follows media in context with cinema. Other similar words are viewer or watcher. Film is the base to which film costume depends on. Actor is the person who wears costume to get into his character better. Genre is the way to categorize both films and characters to unravel enormous amount of films.

### 4.1 Film and cinema

Film industry is considered being invented by the brothers of Lumière in France in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. There had been many devices to produce moving images but Lumière brothers were the first ones to make cinema as an industry. After Lumières famous films *La Sortie des usines Lumière* (1895)<sup>103</sup> and *L'arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat* (1896)<sup>104</sup> others started to film and develop cinema in the atmosphere of revolution in industry, culture and behaviour.<sup>105</sup> Since then films have developed technically (beginning of sound film in 1920's and generalization of colour film in 1930's) and artistically to what we call films and cinema today.

Boggs and Petrie consider in they book *The Art of Watching Films* (2004) film both as an industry (cinema) and as an art form (film), since there is an on going conflict between aesthetic and commercial interests.<sup>106</sup> Film is an interaction of sight, sound and motion. As an art form film uses the same elements that the visual arts are using. It exploits the interplay of light and shadow like photography or painting. Film manipulates three-dimensional space like sculpture and it focuses on moving images like pantomiming. Boggs and Petrie consider the moving images of film to have a rhythm like dance. According to them there is also drama in the film when it communicates both visually and verbally: gestures and actions are visual communication and verbal communication is the dialogue in the film. Film communicates by metaphors, imageries and symbols like poetry does. Finally film

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<sup>103</sup> *La Sortie des usines Lumière* 1895

<sup>104</sup> *L'arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat* 1896

<sup>105</sup> Bagh 1998, 23

<sup>106</sup> Boggs & Petrie 2004

can be compared with a novel, when it expands or compresses the time and space having wide borders for telling the story. Even though film has a lot of similarities to other art forms it is unique when it can expand limits that the other arts inside their own medias can't. Film conveys an overwhelming sense of reality to a spectator and Boggs and Petrie consider that with the evolution of film technology we are going more close to realism.<sup>107</sup>

Lotman thinks that film is part of the ideological combat of culture and art of its time. Therefore film is in contact with the life outside *the language of film*, which can produce endless amount of meanings. The meanings can be more important to the researcher or individual of the time than the aesthetic point of view.<sup>108</sup>

## 4.2 Film costume

Film costume has its origin in theatre costumes since the theatre is the forefather of cinema. Hollander says that the costume is in relation with the human body. It may seem granted, but it is the base for drama of body language: visual expression of dance doesn't need so much from the costume, but nonverbal acting highlights the costume to 'speak' loudly. Costume's visual etiquette has been established by the fine arts. As an art form they however create their own formulas, when they follow certain expectations and are visually satisfying.<sup>109</sup>

Even though there are some similarities between theatre costumes and film costumes they have very different needs. Theatre costume needs to make an effect from far, whereas film costume can be filmed from a close-up, where very small details can be important for the storytelling. Aumont et al. consider that because film is loyal to details, its representation is more realistic than in the other ways of art like theatre or painting.<sup>110</sup> Hollander remarks that in the beginning the aim of the costumes was to catch the eye with something unexpected. Afterwards the reality of drama in films demanded also costumes to go more natural way of expression. Conversely Hollander

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<sup>107</sup> Boggs & Petrie 2004, 2-3

<sup>108</sup> Lotman 1989, 49

<sup>109</sup> Hollander 1993, 237

<sup>110</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 77

mentions that ordinary costumes always look extraordinary when they are taken to performing arts like films. This power of drama also affects on ordinary clothes when they get their power by resembling the ones in films. This is the way cinema affects on fashion.<sup>111</sup>

Film costume is an outcome of film production process. It starts from the script and it is an interaction between director, production designer, costumer, actor, hairstylist and makeup artist. The production designer makes many decisions about the costumes, like colour palette of the film, which are guidelines of the costume design. The main guideline of costume design is to make audience to believe that the actor/actress is really the character, not him- or herself. Other aims of costume design are to make costume feel as comfortable as clothes and to modify actor's real figure to the direction needed. Film costumes can aim for realistic visuality, *costume drama* or fantasy. Realistic films and costume dramas need large-scale research to make the illusion of authenticity. Actors start to internalize their roles with costumes and make-up.<sup>112</sup> I see costume as a one unit that combines, clothes, accessories, hair/wig, makeup, special gear and so on. A costume designer has the responsibility of the artistic vision, which includes all these.

Church Gibson defines a film costume to be simply clothes worn on films. They can be periodical or contemporary dresses. Film costume can be considered to be a part of *mise-en-scène: the visual organisation or composition of what is in front of the camera*. It means props, lightning, setting, colour, positioning of figures and costume. There costume is a signifying element, which can carry meanings and create emotion against the character. Church Gibson criticises that this viewpoint is not interested in costume as its own mode of expression.<sup>113</sup> Church Gibson most likely refers to the tradition of costumes that has begun from the early days of the theatre and that they should be seen as their own units. Costume as a *mise-en-scène* in film makes it to be part of the defining elements of genre. Church Gibson says that they can also be used

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<sup>111</sup> Hollander 1993, 239

<sup>112</sup> Boggs & Petrie 2004, 108-112

<sup>113</sup> Church Gibson 1998 36-38



to cue the responses of audiences. There the costume is only one of the defining elements with the plot, characterization and setting.<sup>114</sup>

Hollander sees clothes (after all costumes can be considered as clothes) in more broad sense when she says that dressing is copying mental images to clothes. Mental images are integrated into our styles by how we create and perceive our identities through clothes.<sup>115</sup> This is not only valid for everyday dressing, but also for the mental images film costumes convey or how spectators interpret them. In the chapter 3.2 *Semiotics of film and film costume* the example of 1930's gangster film did not imitate the real life of 30's but reflected the mental image the spectators have from the era they have not lived. Film costume is one of the key elements of film to convey this modified reality. It makes spectators visual need satisfied. Even though the film would display a certain historical era, its costumes state diverse signals, which the audience need to believe in: historical signals of costumes, the current state of fashion and the spectators' view of 'natural'.<sup>116</sup> Film costume has plenty of demands to fulfil and there the costume designer's professionalism is seen.

### **4.3 Film character**

In Dyer's opinion a character in a film posses a fair amount of signs that audience sees: audience's foreknowledge, character's name, appearance, speech, mimics, action, mise-en-scène or recognition of the star. Stories of films often have their origin from familiar books, TV-series or tales. Some characters are universally familiar, such as Sherlock Holmes or Dracula, despite their appearance in numerous films. When a spectator knows that the certain star plays in the film, he has certain expectations of the character and the film. Like if John Wayne plays in a film, spectator assumes film to be in western and John Wayne's character to be similar with his previous ones. Character's name gives hints of his particular personality traits.<sup>117</sup>

Most significant trait of the character is his appearance, because it indicates directly to character's personality. Dyer categorises appearance into physiognomy, dress and the

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<sup>114</sup> Church Gibson 1998 36-38

<sup>115</sup> Hollander 1993, 349-350

<sup>116</sup> Hollander 1993, 307

<sup>117</sup> Dyer 1998, 106-109

star image. Physiognomies are the considerations of male-female, old-young, handsome-ugly, sensitive-rude, generous-mean and so on. Other way is to put characters into groups such as cowards, businessmen, mothers, intellectuals or nobility. Dyer sees that dress has a 'dual' articulation: It tells about the character's social order in general but also about his nature. Hints from the social order can be age group, class, occupation etc. Personal traits can be stereotypes, like 'the it girl', or personal such as clean, warm looking clothes, comfortable or chic. Dyer sees that clothes, hairstyle and accessories of the character are culturally coded and assumed to indicate the personality of a character best. Appearance is used in films to raise character's artificial 'identity'.<sup>118</sup>

In addition to character's appearance, Dyer considers the star recognition to be other crucial way of seeing the character. Dyer calls that character's personality and feelings are based on 'truth': *what the reader takes to be the truth about the person of the star playing the part.*<sup>119</sup> I consider this 'truth', which is based on the star persona, to be when a spectator considers a star to possess a sum of characteristics of his previous characters. It is a blurred line between acting skills, personality, star persona and traits of a character.

#### **4.4 Actor**

Lotman considers film actor's performance as a semiotic message, which has three levels: director level, everyday behaviour and actor's performance. The first semiotic level is the director's work such as framing and the means to direct actor's performance. A spectator however doesn't know anything about these decisions, but focuses on the second and third semiotic levels where he sees the actor and the character as one. It is a paradox where human figure on screen is so close to the real one, but it is at the same time semiotic and full of duplicated meanings. It is a sign and chain of signs, which are full with connotations.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Dyer 1998, 109-110

<sup>119</sup> Dyer 1998, 125

<sup>120</sup> Lotman 1989, 88-90, Connotation is opened in the chapter *6.1 Five codes*.

The actor is under aesthetic law of his time and therefore the character has to follow the aesthetic norms, although film would represent some other time than present day. It is seen very clearly in the cases when a film represents beautiful heroine, like Cleopatra. The costume and makeup of Elisabeth Taylor as a *Cleopatra* (1963)<sup>121</sup> follows the beauty norms of 60's and doesn't try to model the beauty norm of the ancient Egypt, which would be challenging for the present day spectators. Therefore film costume is not a replica of a historical costume, but a sign of films own time.<sup>122</sup> This level is mixed also with the actor's mythological persona that is as real as his role. Film character is therefore a mix of meanings of the role and this *film myth*. An actor becomes a concept and spectator combines different films as a series based on actor. These mental series are considered as an artistic summation, regardless to the notion that each film is unique and have separate directors.<sup>123</sup> Dyer calls this *film myth* as *a star image*.<sup>124</sup>

## 4.5 Genre

Bordwell and Thompson define *a genre* in cinema to indicate to certain types of films. The genre has its own 'title' under which films can be organised: musical, comedy or action picture. Genres are practical terms, which develop unofficially as there comes new films and need new genres. One can't put define boundaries between genres since they change over time and the definition of genres are public and therefore very broad. Some genres can be specified by their themes: *A science fiction film features a technology beyond the reach of contemporary science*.<sup>125</sup>

Other way to define a genre is the manner of presentation; like in musicals singing is the most important way of acting. But genres like comedy, horror and drama work with the emotion they convey to amuse. One broad genre can include different variations of it within. As an example Bordwell and Thompson use comedy, which includes genres like *slapstick*, *romantic comedy* or *parody*. Genre is used in film

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<sup>121</sup> Cleopatra 1963

<sup>122</sup> Lotman 1989, 91-92

<sup>123</sup> Lotman 1989, 93

<sup>124</sup> Dyer, 1979, chapter 6 *Stars as Specific Images* 61-83

<sup>125</sup> Bordwell & Thompson 2010, 328

industry as an easy way of categorizing a film, which makes marketing easier when thousands of other films are published at the same time. Genres help spectators to find films they want to see or which they prefer. Genre is a category, which helps to describe and analyse films but it can't evaluate them. The most important observation Bordwell and Thompson have made from genre is that -- *genres help assure that most members of a culture share at least some general notions about the types of films that compete for our attention.*<sup>126</sup> Genre is a concept created inside one culture, like in Hollywood films and understanding genre works only within the members of this culture.

Lotman defines genre to be a way of categorising and organising the artistic world. It is done by a certain conditional criteria and with the method of organising meanings. Genre works by creating and breaking expectations and this makes artistic meaning possible.<sup>127</sup> Hietala proclaims that audience's knowledge of genres cumulates, when they are frequently exposed to representatives of genres. This 'mythological' world, which has all the characteristics of a genre, is in the head of the spectator and it is activated by very few clues. When a spectator sees a hint in a film, he creates a semiotic reference: a western town seen in a film is referred to Indians, prairie, cowboys or cattle. Hietala calls it *genre consciousness* and it creates a social meaning of generalisation. Frequent exposure constructs the experience of a spectator and makes symbols into shared ones.<sup>128</sup> Genre is affected by the need to be convincing. Because there are similarities between the films inside one genre, a spectator assumes certain characters to behave certain way: to have certain behavioural norm. These predicted norms make a film convincing. These are called *generic rules*, which are developing when the genres are developing.<sup>129</sup>

Since films can be put into genres, also the characters can put in their own genres inside films. Classic Hollywood film works most with the dualistic relation of protagonist and his opposite.<sup>130</sup> Protagonist is the person to whom the story happens

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<sup>126</sup> Bordwell & Thompson 2010, 328-329

<sup>127</sup> Lotman 1989, 95

<sup>128</sup> Hietala 1994, 168-169

<sup>129</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 117-118

<sup>130</sup> Altman 1999, 24

to and whose journeys we follow until he achieves to complete his task or win his opposite the antagonist.<sup>131</sup> In western film a sheriff is in difficulties with the outlaw or in a gangster film a gangster has his rival or police to compete with.<sup>132</sup> Antagonist is the counterforce of the hero to whom the word villain is often used.<sup>133</sup> Action films have action heroes and their villains, in horror films there are monsters or villains and in Sci-Fi there are aliens.

## 4.6 Film spectator

Film spectator can be defined from different point of views. Film spectators are often non-professionals who watch films for entertainment. Their experiences are difficult to study because there are no documents left after watching the film. Everyday-spectator's film watching is an ordinary watching of images where conceptions and opinions blend together in the everyday communication. Palin says that the professional spectator observes art images by comparing them to the others, mixing at the same time the contexts of his professional knowledge in his observation.<sup>134</sup>

The spectator in the sociological sense is a part of a certain 'population' that visits the cinema. This approach considers the spectator more in the sense of large public.<sup>135</sup> Aumont et al. consider spectator from aesthetic point of view where spectator and films are in interaction. Film watching as a subjective experience is psychological and aesthetic: subject-spectator.<sup>136</sup> Palin states that watching is always a subjective interpretation and therefore it cannot be studied neutrally.<sup>137</sup> Spectator is a mix of subjective and communal approach. Watching is a subjective action, but it is connected to larger cultural context, such as the other spectators, cinema and media or culture around film. Kuusamo sees that an individual person as a spectator is mentally complex from the semiotic point of view. Therefore the *great audience* can explain the mix of sign systems logically by opening symbols that feel at first very

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<sup>131</sup> Campbell 1993, 38-40

<sup>132</sup> Altman 1999, 24

<sup>133</sup> Mikkola 2006, 14

<sup>134</sup> Palin 1998, 129

<sup>135</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 182

<sup>136</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 182-183

<sup>137</sup> Palin 1998, 126

straightforward, to ambiguous meanings or they can divide complex entities to more simple parts.<sup>138</sup>

Semiotics sees a spectator as an implicit, nonperson gaze. The image is emphasized instead of spectator since images have something, which affects the spectator and thereby the spectator creates different positions in relation to the image. Semiotics aims to clarify the meanings in the dialogue that the spectator does with the image rather than how the image (film and film costume) has been created.<sup>139</sup> In this research I consider the spectator to be implicit gaze that represents something about the wider audience. In the analysis I am not in contact with any person, but with digital journalism: *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks. Cinema's sartorial trendsetters and their signature outfits.*<sup>140</sup> Nevertheless the feature represents its author as a subjective, because he has collected and evaluated (perhaps with the help of his colleagues) 50 film costumes from the immeasurable amount of all film costumes and characters.

According to Lotman a film is a communicative system which language a spectator must have learned to understand it. When as spectator watches film first times, its language is incomprehensible. At the second stage of learning the spectator learns to understand films shallowly when he thinks that it copies world the way it is. When the spectator finally learns to understand film, he understands it to be a communicative system that creates world actively instead of only copying it. Lotman believes that in visual arts, an image can get content that is typical for the verbal expression: an image of painting can have allegories. The spectator has learned the meanings of allegories from the culture code outside the visual arts.<sup>141</sup> Present-day films, considered as an art or not, are part of everyday life and learning their languages starts in the childhood from the first movie experiences. Every-day spectator does not exactly study films but the ability to 'read' films is a cultural process that develops in every viewing. One stage of learning can be when the child sees an image of rose in a film: understanding of the primary meaning that it is a rose is understanding in *denotative* level. In

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<sup>138</sup> Kuusamo 1990, 167

<sup>139</sup> Palin 1998, 127

<sup>140</sup> Power July 31st 2012

<sup>141</sup> Lotman 1989, 11-12, 16

*connotative* level an adult spectator understands the rose to be the symbol of passion or love.<sup>142</sup>

The highest level of understanding and reviewing film, as an art form is dualistic: a mix of realistic-emotional acceptance and knowledge of fiction at the same time. This concept Lotman calls *similarity*. Film appeals on spectator's sense of reality, when he relates to it as emotionally as in real life event, but at the same time understands the irrationality of it. He sees both similarities and contradictions of film and reality. Similarity is a concept of culture and it is in touch with spectators past art experiences and acquired art codes.<sup>143</sup> Spectator puts film into perspective with reality and films he has seen. Lotman uses black-and-white film as an example, how spectator sees film from the perspective of similarity. Black-and-white film is conditionalized from the real world. It is a clear abstraction of reality, when it does not produce colours. At the same it has similarities with reality, so in the eyes of spectator it has also the *illusion of similarity*.<sup>144</sup> Film has many levels and their degrees of difficulty are organised uneven inside a film. Lotman states that different spectators, who have different readiness of understanding, 'peel' these levels differently and receive different meanings.<sup>145</sup> When a spectator watches film he sees actor, character and film costume at the same time. He does not divide the aspects but lets himself to be entertained by his identification to the character and character's development in the story.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 93

<sup>143</sup> Lotman 1989, 12, 25, 17

<sup>144</sup> Lotman 1989, 26

<sup>145</sup> Lotman 1989, 97

<sup>146</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 216-217

## 5 Data: TotalFilm.com – 50 most Iconic Movie Looks

To analyse iconic film costumes I have chosen feature *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks. Cinema's sartorial trendsetters and their signature outfits* from the TotalFilm.com website which is professionalized on films.<sup>147</sup> Total Film is a website and a magazine that publish everything that has something to do with films and cinema. Total Film is a part of international media group *Future plc.* and it is located in Bath, United Kingdom.<sup>148</sup> Since the website is an expert of films, I can assume that the visitors of the website are film fans and have much knowledge about cinema.

The analysis focuses on the feature by the author Rob Power: *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks. Cinema's sartorial trendsetters and their signature outfits*. There are 50 different looks in the feature, which have been ranked by the author. Each ranked look is shown as a one slide that includes the name and photo of the character, name of film, release date and two different texts to open the costume with the titles: *The Look* and *Key Garment*.<sup>149</sup> *The look* opens the appearance of the character. It includes make-up, hair/wig, character and clothes. But like Aumont et al. have said, a spectator does not divide these aspects, but sees them as one medium.<sup>150</sup> Also a costume designer does not design only the costumes, but the whole appearance of a character. Therefore I see also the whole appearance of a character as a one medium. *Key garment* text opens the most important item of the character from the opinion of the author.

One slide compresses the film costume into information package where the information is shortened and the iconic costume is more emphasized that it would be in the film. The costume's key elements are also written open, which helps the analysis of the photo. Therefore it is easier to analyse the iconic value of one film costume from the slide than to analyse it within the film. However the films are clearly the basis of the feature and this research. Without films there would not be TotalFilm.com website nor iconic film costumes. The website TotalFilm.com is from

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<sup>147</sup> Power July 31st 2012

<sup>148</sup> Future

<sup>149</sup> Power July 31st 2012

<sup>150</sup> Aumont et al. 1997, 216-217



United kingdom and the 50 listed costumes in a feature are Hollywood films and therefore the analysis focuses on the western film costumes and western spectator's point of view. The feature has been published July 31st 2012 and the listed films are from year 1915 to 2011.<sup>151</sup> Data in the feature is already two years old and there have come already many films that could be considered iconic film costumes of our time in the future. However there has not been similar way to summarize data like in this feature. Characters I have chosen are characters of the past years and not from the exact year of 2012. They have lived after their release as iconic characters and iconic film costumes. According to the website's high level of professionalism, it can be assumed that the author is a professional journalist of films, but it has not been declared clear at the website. The author's and the website's expertise refers to that some film professionals consider these film costumes to be iconic.

Mikkonen says that image and text are rarely without each other, but often in interaction. The origin of text is in the image, whereas the meaning of an image has always been in context with the verbal communication, even though they both can survive alone. Words are added to picture to convey the meaning better.<sup>152</sup> This is done also in the slides of *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks* to open more the costume seen in the image and it's iconic value. According to Mitchell all forms of expression are mixed and impure. There are no 'purely' visual or verbal arts but they work as a heterogeneous representation. All representations and medias are multiform.<sup>153</sup> So that I can analyse the iconic value of film costume, I see text and image as intertextuality: the relation of image and text, function of their interaction and which principles guide them.<sup>154</sup> The image has endless amount of semantics so the interpretation of it is also endless and therefore there can't be found only one explanation.<sup>155</sup> In this feature text helps to halt the huge amount of semantics in the image, when it lets a spectator to focus on only in certain ones.

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<sup>151</sup> Power 31st July 2012

<sup>152</sup> Mikkonen 2005, 13, 16

<sup>153</sup> Mitchell 1994, 5

<sup>154</sup> Mikkonen 2005, 21-22

<sup>155</sup> Goodman 1976, 225-232

## 6 Analysing method

Language and visual communication are both used to convey the same meaning that originates from certain culture, such as western culture. They do it differently from their own constructions of representing. For example in a visual image we don't use sentences, verbs or nouns that are used in language. Nonetheless image and text can both signify the same meaning.<sup>156</sup> I use Roland Barthes method of *five codes* to analyse the character and his costume from picture of each slide of *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks*. Since one slide has both image and text I use other method of Barthes *Rhetoric of the image* to open the interplay of the image and text and how they carry together the meaning of iconic film costume to the spectator.

With these two methods I aim to have a coherent picture of one slide and the iconic value it transmits. *The iconic message* of Rhetoric of the image is very similar to five codes so I adapt these two analysis methods to fit for the analysis of the slide. The iconic message is the five codes will be compared with the linguistic message of the text. Together they generate *the cultural message* that tells something about the character and his clothes and can answer to the iconic value of certain film costume.

### 6.1 Five codes

Barthes has originally developed method of five codes to analyse written text, but it has been used also to analyse images. It is a proper method to analyse representation of image used in the slide. Barthes sees that a novel can be divided into *lexias*: smallest units with which semiotics of a text can be studied. According to Barthes all lexical signifiers can be grouped under these five codes.<sup>157</sup> A picture can also be divided and studied at the same way. These five codes are:

1. *Actions or Proairetic Code*
2. *Hermeneutic code*
3. *Semic code*
4. *Symbolic code*
5. *Cultural code*<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Kress & Leeuwen 2006, 19

<sup>157</sup> Barthes 1990, 19

<sup>158</sup> Barthes 1990, 19

First code is *Actions* or *Proairetic Code*, which refers straightforwardly to the actions that happens chronologically in the text. It is a generic title of different actions where logic and result of these actions can be seen. Actions are seen in a text by listing sequences, which conveys the story: stroll, murder, rendezvous.<sup>159</sup> In a pictorial sense it is all the actions one can see from the image.

Second is *Hermeneutic code*, which includes all the terms that opens the enigma of image or text. They are the units of a text that keep the narrative in suspense with turn of events. This code can be differentiated, indicated, put together and revealed.<sup>160</sup> Put into the medium of image, hermeneutic code is the composition of elements in a picture. It is the dynamics and proportions of a picture. It is a relation of cause and consequence.<sup>161</sup>

Third code is *Semic code*, which means the smallest units of meaning, *semes* that can be opened from the text or image. They can be linked to the character, object or place and put into thematic groups.<sup>162</sup> Semic code is all the things that one sees in the image and the amount of different semes in it is almost without limits.<sup>163</sup> Barthes sees that the *seme* is only a beginning for choosing perspective of meaning from the text.<sup>164</sup> This means that the interpretation depend on which semes the reader of the text or image focus on.

To understand semic code it is important to understand Barthes definition of *denotative* and *connotative* stages of image or text. Denotative stage is the open meaning of a text that is understandable to the person who understands its language. Connotative stage is when the text includes cultural associations.<sup>165</sup> Signified characterizes seen *semes* as an adjective, attribute or predicate.<sup>166</sup> These terms of text can be seen in a wider sense in both text and image. When one observes the picture of

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<sup>159</sup> Barthes 1990, 18-19

<sup>160</sup> Barthes 1990, 19

<sup>161</sup> Blom 1998, 217

<sup>162</sup> Barthes 1990, 19

<sup>163</sup> Blom 1998, 211

<sup>164</sup> Barthes 1990, 191

<sup>165</sup> Seppä 2012, 146

<sup>166</sup> Barthes 1990, 190

a person in a car, denotation tells that it is some person in the car. Connotation can tell something about the person's occupation, wealth, interest and his relation to the car. It depends on which semes the onlooker focuses in the picture.

Fourthly comes *Symbolic code*, which means the multivalence and reversibility of text or image. Symbolic codes create wide structure of symbols by having opposites.<sup>167</sup> It is a base made by binary oppositions that create meanings.<sup>168</sup> In the symbolic level semes are connected to the symbolic codes of culture.

Last is *Cultural code*, which refers to the culture outside the text or image. To understand it the reader needs to have a large number of knowledge from certain culture contexts such as literacy, history, medicine, psychology and so on. The code covers all the parts of cultural knowledge.<sup>169</sup> It is in a way the same thing as intertextuality of the text. Text is considered more interesting the more it refers to the cultural systems outside the text.<sup>170</sup>

## 6.2 Rhetoric of the Image

Barthes has developed *Rhetoric of the Image* as a way of semiotic close reading for the analysis of an image.<sup>171</sup> Barthes sees that today *linguistic message* is present constantly in mass communications such as a title, press article or film dialogue.<sup>172</sup> In slides of *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks* one can see the connection of linguistic message and the image.<sup>173</sup> Analysis of Barthes focuses on the three messages that the image with text conveys.

First message is *the linguistic message*, which means everything that is written in the image. It has both denotative and connotative stages, but it can be counted as a one

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<sup>167</sup> Barthes 1990, 17-19

<sup>168</sup> Blom 1998, 209, 219

<sup>169</sup> Barthes 1990, 19-20

<sup>170</sup> Blom 1998, 209, 222

<sup>171</sup> Seppä 2012, 146

<sup>172</sup> Barthes 1977, 38

<sup>173</sup> Power 31st July 2012

message.<sup>174</sup> Barthes sees that the linguistic message can firstly either reduce the meaning of the image or expand it, like in a comic strip balloon. Second and more common way is that the text tells the same story as the image in a slightly different way. The linguistic message in that case can either *anchor* or *relay* to the image. Relay means that text 'illustrates' the image, like in cartoons or comic strips.<sup>175</sup> In the slides of *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks* text is used to anchor the signs of the image. *Anchorage* means that the linguistic message connects the 'floating chain' of signified in the image and guides the reader through the image by avoiding some signs and focusing on the others. It is commonly used in press and advertisements.<sup>176</sup> The two texts *The Look* and *Key Garment* in the slide are meant for a reader to focus on the details of the character and his costume in the picture.

Other two messages are parts of the *iconic message* in the 'pure' image, which has discontinuous signs: *the denoted image* (he uses also a term *a coded iconic message*) and *the connoted image* (he uses also a term *a non-coded iconic message*).<sup>177</sup> The denoted message is all the entities one sees in the image, which includes objects, shapes, colours or compositions of an image.<sup>178</sup> The connoted image is when it signifies certain values and deeper meanings. We have learnt from our culture how to read these signs of values from the image.<sup>179</sup> Connotative signs can be divided into *metonymic* and *synecdochic* signs. Metonymy is when the concept is replaced with the other that is associated to it.<sup>180</sup> Like when Hollywood is used as a metonymy for the whole film industry of the USA. Synecdochic sign is when the part of the term refers to whole or in reverse.<sup>181</sup> Like the term *film crew* means all the employees who are needed to produce a film. One sees both *the denoted image* and *the connoted image* at the same time from the picture. Image's denotations and connotations are connected with the linguistic message.

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<sup>174</sup> Barthes 1977, 33-34

<sup>175</sup> Barthes 1977, 40

<sup>176</sup> Barthes 1977, 38-41

<sup>177</sup> Barthes 1977, 36-37

<sup>178</sup> Barthes 1977, 34-35

<sup>179</sup> Barthes 1977, 42

<sup>180</sup> Seppä 2012, 148

<sup>181</sup> Seppä 2012, 148

Linguistic message and iconic message together create, according to Barthes, *a third message* or *cultural message*.<sup>182</sup> Reader then understands the relation between the thing signified along with signifying text and image. A third message creates the psychic image of the object. Barthes sees that to read this third message one needs simply to have practical, national, cultural or aesthetic knowledge that is bound to one's perception from the image.<sup>183</sup> I connect this third message from the slide to the semiotics of an icon to answer to my research question.

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<sup>182</sup> Barthes 1977, 36-42

<sup>183</sup> Barthes 1977, 35-36, 42

## 7 A Hero of the Adventure

For the analysis I have chosen three similar characters, heroes of different genres of Adventure films: Indiana Jones – *Action Adventure*<sup>184</sup>, Forrest Gump – *Dramatic Adventure*<sup>185</sup> and Harry Potter – *Fantasy Adventure*<sup>186</sup>. To analyse similar characters from different genres I can see better the possible similarities between the costumes of these similar heroes and protagonists. All characters are also chosen to be the same sex to avoid the issue of gender studies that is not in the centre of this thesis. Three films have also been published approximately ten years after the former. So they tell something about the films, characters and film costumes of their decades: 80's, 90's and 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since I have seen the films whose costumes I focus on, my interpretation is affected by this foreknowledge.

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<sup>184</sup> Raiders of the Lost Ark. Film defined to belong in the genres: Action, Adventure.

<sup>185</sup> Forrest Gump. Film defined to belong in the genres: Drama, Romance. In the story Forrest Gump accidentally gets into adventures all over the world before he gets together with his childhood friend Jenny.

<sup>186</sup> Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. Film defined to belong in the genres: Adventure, Family and Fantasy.

## 7.1 Indiana Jones- Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)

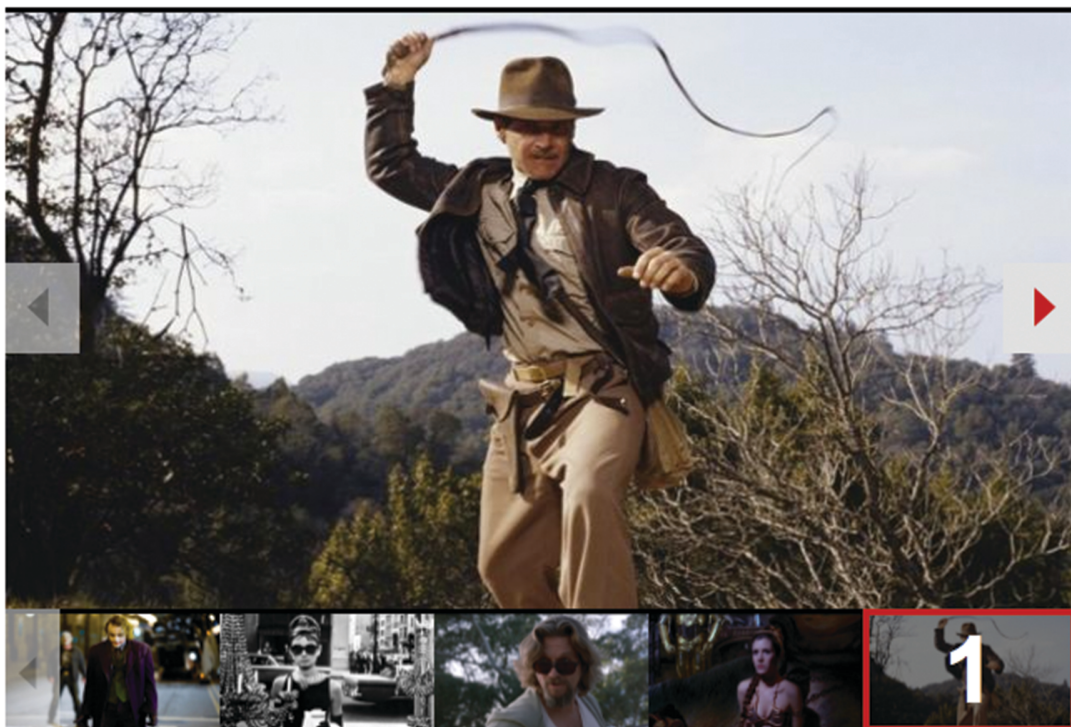
**Director:** Steven Spielberg

**Writers:** Lawrence Kasdan (screenplay), George Lucas (story)

**Stars:** Harrison Ford, Karen Allen and Paul Freeman

**Country of production:** USA

**Synopsis:** *Archaeologist and adventurer Indiana Jones is hired by the US government to find the Ark of the Covenant before the Nazis.*<sup>187</sup>



# 1

### Indiana Jones - Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)

**The Look:** How do you make an archaeology professor look cool? How about giving him a whip, some well worn leathers and a fedora? It works wonders for Harrison Ford, after all, whose Indiana Jones is one of the most instantly recognisable icons ever to hit the big screen.

Tweet 51

Like 78

submit

**Key Garment:** It's got to be that fedora, probably the most famous hat in Hollywood and easily the most stylish, even in the most fraught of international treasure hunting situations.

« Previous 1 of 50 Next »

Picture 1. The slide of Indiana Jones and his iconic film costume. *I'm gonna blow up the Ark, Rene.*

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<sup>187</sup> Raiders of the Lost Ark



### 7.1.1 The iconic message of an image: The Five Codes

#### **Actions and Hermeneutic code**

Indiana is somewhere in the mountain area according to the peak of a mountain and pine trees behind him. The sun is shining at the zenith, laying a shadow to Indiana's face. By this we can assume his location to be close to the equator. Indiana is slightly above the viewer so one can presume he is standing on something - a truck or rock maybe. The image of Indiana is a mid shot, which shows some part of him in more detail while still giving an impression of the whole, although we can't see his shoes. Indiana is in the middle of action. He swirls his lasso, ready to hit with it his enemy under him. We are witnessing a scene of action. Indiana's costume looks more like a gear since he has a lot of items and clothes with him: khaki trousers and -shirt, a hat, a shoulder bag, a gun belt, a leather jacket, a tie etc. Clothes suited for travelling in the threatening places.

#### **Semes and their connotations**

**a brown high-crowned, wide brimmed fedora hat** – ranger, old style

**brown short leather jacket with zipper** – pilot, biker

**a cotton khaki shirt with long sleeves** –desert, military, explorer

**a tan coloured leather belt** - practicability

**a khaki coloured shoulder bag** – reluctance of the pack bag, place for tools, army

**a black tie** –formalness, sophistication

**a gun belt** –cowboy, Wild West, fight, police, army

**loose khaki trousers with a high waist** -1930's man trousers, desert battle dress

#### **Symbolic codes and cultural codes of an image**

Indiana's outfit is all about brown colours and shades of khaki. Brown is the colour of ploughed earth and primary earth and nature. It indicates to security, stability and strength. It is also a very puritan colour. Dark brown is the colour of hard work and reliability.<sup>188</sup> It gives an impression that in the tricky situation you can rely on Indiana. Brown as a colour is close to earth since brown shades are normal colours of

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<sup>188</sup> Lurie 2000, 203

leather and fabrics. Brown is a useful colour because it shows the dirt least.<sup>189</sup> That is handy colour for the ranger who has no time to wash clothes and travels in places where water is scarce. Indy's khaki clothes refer to the military, since khaki colour has been used to hide in desert battles. It is the colour of camouflage, which Indiana often needs to hide from his foes. Khaki is the colour preferred by the huntsmen and hikers. As a colour symbol it suggests practical and aggressive action.<sup>190</sup>

Khaki colour was developed by the British colonial armies, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to conceal oneself better in the desert, since colourful uniforms used before were an easy target.<sup>191</sup> Therefore the khaki colour has a strong allusion to the military and colonialism. Indiana behaves in a colonialist way in his civil life by acquiring native treasures to the museums in the name of science. Indiana's loose-fitting khaki trousers are battle dress trousers made from cavalry twill.<sup>192</sup> High waist with pleated front have the style of the 1930's men's trousers. They refer to the era the film is portraying. With the khaki colour, the trousers refer to the desert battle dress.

The Herbert Johnson hat making company makes Indiana's fedora hat. It is from sable coloured wool felt, which is trimmed with a brown ribbon. Indiana is keen on his fedora and rescues it every time it gets lost.<sup>193</sup> The Herbert Johnson company is established 1889 and has served the British royal, militaries and civil with hats.<sup>194</sup> One would think that a ranger like Indiana would use a cowboy hat such as Stetson. Indiana's British quality hat therefore says something about his other side as a professor of archaeology in the Marshall College. He has a side of an intellectual, who values high level craftsmanship and quality. When Indiana becomes professor Henry Jr. Jones, his look changes radically to the more gentlemen look with suit.<sup>195</sup> It is difficult to see from the picture, but apparently Indiana has a black tie that fits to his other side as a professor.

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<sup>189</sup> Lurie 2000, 203

<sup>190</sup> Lurie 2000, 203

<sup>191</sup> Craik 2005, 37-38

<sup>192</sup> Luceno 2008, 12-13

<sup>193</sup> Luceno 2008, 12-13

<sup>194</sup> Herbert Johnson

<sup>195</sup> Luceno 2008, 112

Indiana has a pilot or biker style leather jacket, which is indeed the A-2 bomber jacket of the U.S Air Force.<sup>196</sup> It was supplied for The United States Army Air Corps for the first time in 1931 with a zipper as a new feature. It is a signature of a fearless pilot: *taking risks, making jokes and cheating death*. The jacket symbolises their spirit and became a treasured garment. One could decorate it, scratch it, get it wet, misuse it and it would last for twenty years without becoming worn out.<sup>197</sup> The popularity of this jacket among bold aviators and its high usability are apparently the reasons why Indiana Jones is using it too. It is the jacket of the daring heroes. With the army-style shoulder bag, Indy has a strong allusion to the military. Indiana has in fact recruited himself to both World Wars. At the Second World War Indiana Jones worked for the Office of Strategic Services.<sup>198</sup> It seems weird that Indiana uses leather jacket in the hot location like in the picture. It seems like he would not be Indiana without his leather jacket to make him look cool.

The bullwhip is the essence of a cowboy, which Indiana uses as a tool and weapon in his travels. It is originally meant for controlling of livestock. In use part of the whip can exceed the speed of sound and make a sonic boom.<sup>199</sup> It is a frightening weapon that can make big damage. As a weapon a whip refers to sadism, because it is used to humans as the same way as for the animals. The cattle whip is the tool of cowboys and characteristics such as stamina, freedom and heroism are linked to cowboys.<sup>200</sup> The whip can tell something about the Indiana's early years in the city of Moab, Utah.<sup>201</sup> At least Indy has taken this special tool of cowboys to complete his gear because of his past experience with it: a whip can be practical in various situations. With a whip and the .455 calibre Webley revolver one can include a fighter into Indy's professor and voyager personas.<sup>202</sup> .455 calibre Webley revolver was the most famous revolver of the British colonial empire army. This revolver served, British soldiers, but the colonial police, sailors, airmen and even African hunters.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Luceno 2008, 12-13

<sup>197</sup> Nelson & Parsons 2002, 11

<sup>198</sup> Lurie 2000, 14-15

<sup>199</sup> Luceno 2008, 12-13

<sup>200</sup> McDowell 1997, 106-107

<sup>201</sup> Luceno 2008, 14

<sup>202</sup> Luceno 2008, 12-13

<sup>203</sup> see Maze 2012 chapter: Introduction

## 7.1.2 The linguistic message

### The Look

*How do you make an archaeology professor look cool? How about giving him a whip, some well worn leathers and a fedora?--*

- The author refers to the contradiction that by Indiana Jones appearance one would not think that he is a professor of archaeology. The look that makes a professor look cool is combined from the fedora hat, bullwhip and leather garments that Indiana has.

*-- It works wonders for Harrison Ford, after all, whose Indiana Jones is one of the most instantly recognisable icons ever to hit the big screen.*

- *It works wonders* could be seen so that the costume has made Indiana Jones the most famous character of Harrison Ford. There is something special in Indiana's costume, since the author has considered it to be the most iconic from all the 50 costumes he has listed. It must be so that when one thinks about the hero of an adventure film, one thinks about the Indiana Jones. The costume has made the character recognisable.

### Key Garment

*It's got to be that fedora, probably the most famous hat in Hollywood --*

- The author refers to the golden age of Hollywood films from 1920's to 1960's where male stars used fedora style hats. It was the sign of a gentleman.

*-- and easily the most stylish, even in the most fraught of international treasure hunting situations.*

- Indiana has style even when he is in the middle of action in the farthest places, where his classic look doesn't really come in handy.

### 7.1.3 The cultural message of Indiana Jones: Real Adventurer

The text of the slide about Indiana Jones is on the opinion that what makes this costume so special is that it makes archaeology to look cool. The hero can be an intelligent professor and an adventurer at the same time. Meanings connoted with archaeology are the opposite of Indiana's costume: museums, slow work, bureaucracy, long research and non-dynamic. Indiana's look hints that intelligence is sexy when you add some action to it. Items that are important in Indy's look are the whip, leatherwear and the famous fedora hat, which is not just a garment. Since Indiana has a special relation with it in the film, it becomes part of the story. Indiana's look is the essence of an adventure hero. In a metaphoric sense his costume has all the strengths from heroes of the real life: cowboys, soldiers, pilots, researchers and explorers. This costume yells for action.

Indiana has dualism in his appearance, which fits for his two alter egos: a professor of archaeology and the wild ranger who runs after the dangerous adventures. Fedora and tie implies the professor in him whereas the leather jacket and whip for the side of a daredevil. This contradiction makes his character and costume interesting. Costume with the one fault of the character, the fear of snakes, makes all the signs of a hero. Like in the Greek mythology Achilles had his knee.

Indiana's costume honours all the archaeologists who have made excavations all over the world since finding of Pompeii in the year 1748.<sup>204</sup> The costume has the essence of an archaeologist with the twist of a soldier-ranger. It appeals to the spectators' imagination of what the fictional archaeologist should look like. Khaki clothes help Indiana to camouflage, leather jacket warms in the cold desert night and lightweight fabrics cool under the hot sun. Khaki clothes and .455 calibre Webley refer to the age of colonialism when there still were unlocated places in the world and place for the adventurers. Costume of Indiana Jones as a part of his character is the representation of the adventure hero. Spectators can identify to Indiana's witty and energetic character with flaws and the costume supports this idea.

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<sup>204</sup> What Happened in Pompeii

## 7.2 Forrest Gump- Forrest Gump (1994)

**Director:** Robert Zemeckis

**Writers:** Winston Groom (novel), Eric Roth (screenplay)

**Stars:** Tom Hanks, Robin Wright, and Gary Sinise

**Country of production:** USA

**Synopsis:** *Forrest Gump, while not intelligent, has accidentally been present at many historic moments, but his true love, Jenny Curran, eludes him.*<sup>205</sup>



# 39

### Forrest Gump - Forrest Gump (1994)

**The Look:** A cream summer suit and a plaid shirt with the top button done up: the perfect outfit for a modest man whose life story shot Tom Hanks into the stratosphere. Forrest Gump's journey through the most turbulent years of modern American history was born with a humility that his fashion-free dress sense reflects here.

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**Key Garment:** Forrest's well-worn trainers – this is a man who's travelled much further than you might presume.

« Previous 39 of 50 Next »

Picture 2. The slide of Forrest Gump and his iconic film costume. *Hello. My name's Forrest, Forrest Gump. You want a chocolate?*

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<sup>205</sup> Forrest Gump

## 7.2.1 The iconic message of an image: The Five Codes

### Actions and Hermeneutic code

The image of Forrest is a medium close up, where the focus is on the bust. One can see that Forrest is in front of a park, since there is a privacy shrub behind him dividing the park from the city. One can see a statue, trees and corners of apartment buildings behind him. It is a warm and sunny day. Forrest is looking at something with a slight serious face. One can't say from the picture if he is sitting or standing. Forrest has a blue-checked shirt with a beige blazer. He has short, simple cut hair and clean-shave.

### Semes and their connotations

**a large-scale check shirt** -summer, day off, casual, labour work, countryside

**white and light blue colours** -summer, sky, clouds, cool colours, harmony

**big collars** -60's and 70's men's fashion

**top button closed** -stiffness, formality, boyishness

**no tie** -casual, comfort, simplicity

**a beige blazer** -classic style, leisure wear, summer, casual

**a rough, short haircut** -practicality, military, crew haircut, worker

**clean-shave** -boyishness, hygiene, businessmen, politicians, Mormons

### Symbolic codes and cultural codes of an image

The large-scale check shirt was used to see in outdoor occupations such as farming, construction work or hunting in the old times. Forrest's shirt has enormous *gingham checks*, which are associated to simple and old-fashioned rural activities. They also refer to thriftiness. In films they are often used to represent rural or small town people, which Forrest certainly is.<sup>206</sup> His main colours are white and tones of light blue. White is associated in Christian religion to purity and innocence.<sup>207</sup> Forrest can be considered simple-minded but he has an innocent, just and loving heart. Blue is linked with distance, calmness, harmony, serenity and rest. In Christianity it is seen to symbolise modesty and devotion.<sup>208</sup> As a countryside man, Forrest is a modest person, who doesn't even understand the scale of the episodes he has been in. The shirt seems

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<sup>206</sup> Lurie 2000, 207

<sup>207</sup> Lurie 2000, 185

<sup>208</sup> Lurie 2000, 185

to have big collars, which refers to the 1970's when collars expanded in men's fashion. But the *gingham checks* were popular both men's and women's fashion in 1960's.<sup>209</sup> In the 1950's American men's shirt style changed from classic shirt to short sleeved with cool weaves, such as Forrest has.<sup>210</sup> Forrest's look is little bit old stylish and with the closed up button, he has a conflict between adult man and boyish look.

Forrest's single-breasted blazer is a sign of male formalness. Knowing that Forrest comes from the state of Alabama, Lurie's definition of a southern man (of the US) fits to his appearance: *At our imaginary national meeting the male southerners will wear lighter-coloured suits-pale greys and beiges--*. Beige is a lighter colour of brown, which is associated with the nature and earth. Beige as a symbolic colour is neutral and it can be used to conceal emotions.<sup>211</sup> Forrest's blazer is simple and it doesn't show off.

Forrest has a hair that is called with the nickname *crew cut*. This army style hair cut was introduced to the everyday man of U.S against hot summer weather in the time of the Second World War.<sup>212</sup> It is possible that he has been used to this convenient hot weather hairstyle and therefore has no intention to change it. With the clean-shave face Forrest's military look is the opposite of his rural referring shirt and the calmness it is suggesting.

## 7.2.2 The linguistic message

### The Look

*A cream summer suit and a plaid shirt with the top button done up: the perfect outfit for a modest man --*

- The author defines Forrest blazer colour to be *cream* and with the rural style shirt he has the look of a humble countryside man. *The perfect outfit* refers to author's notion that the style of the film costume has succeeded in his opinion to represent the modesty of Forrest.

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<sup>209</sup> Shih 1997, 133

<sup>210</sup> Lurie 2000, 173

<sup>211</sup> Lurie 2000, 110, 203-204

<sup>212</sup> Keep Cool with Green. LIFE magazine July 14, 1941



-- *whose life story shot Tom Hanks into the stratosphere.*

- The author has an opinion that the film *Forrest Gump* has contributed Tom Hanks's career to be the one of the most famous male actors in the USA. *Shot into the atmosphere* is a metonym for the quick lift to the stardom in the Hollywood film industry. Film costume has helped the character of Forrest to be well known alongside helping Tom Hanks to be famous actor.

*Forrest Gump's journey through the most turbulent years of modern American history*

--

- *Journey through the most turbulent years* refer to the adventures Forrest has taken because of the twist of fate. *Turbulent years* refer to the recent history events of the USA such as Vietnam War, hippie movement, cold war or Hurricane Carmen. *Modern American history* refers to the core idea of the film to tell the recent history of the USA through an honourable character, which can be the reason of the high popularity of film.

-- *was born with a humility that his fashion-free dress sense reflects here.*

- The style of Forrest symbolises his modesty as a hero in the opinion of the author. *Fashion-free* marks that Forrest is not interested to dress by the daily fashion, which refers to his appreciation of the simple way of life.

### **Key Garment**

*Forrest's well-worn trainers* --

- The author mentions trainers, which are not seen in the picture to be Forrest's most important garment of his costume. In the film Forrest is a very good long distance runner, but the author more likely thinks that the trainers symbolises of his long adventure before he gets together with his true love, Jenny.

-- *this is a man who's travelled much further than you might presume.*

- This hint to the notion that appearances can be deceiving. Forrest doesn't look like a war hero, athlete or businessman, even though he is all these. More likely his values are seen from his costume: fairness, innocence and warmth.

### **7.2.3 The cultural message of Forrest Gump: Our Hero**

The linguistic message of the slide refers to the modesty in both in Forrest's character and his appearance. There is some kind of puritanism in his costume: top button done up, plain suit and simple shirt. It refers to the protestant values of labour and simple life. From the appearance of Forrest we can tell about his story of different periods of his life. He is a country guy, from which his shirt tells. He has also the routine to cut his hair like he did, when he was in military. It is practical to take care of.

Forrest is dressed like men older than him. Forrest's look is more like common look and seems that style is not one of his purposes when he puts clothes on. Forrest character's style is dualistic, since it has both simple countryside men look added with hints of military. Therefore it tells about dualism in his character. The inner child is strong in Forrest, which can be seen from his body of an adult.

Forrest's appearance indicates to the virtues fit for a hero: fairness, innocence and modesty. He is not at all a tough hero, but a gentle one. He looks like a normal man but has a heart of a hero inside. We can see from his costume that he doesn't even consider himself as a hero. One cannot see the 'hero' from his appearance straight. It suggests that clothes don't make the man, as his actions do. Forrest is a representation of the 'everyday hero'. A hero, in who the corresponding ones of reality are summarized. Forrest is the most famous character of Tom Hanks and therefore his 'trademark' of stardom. Tom Hanks is Forrest Gump and Forrest Gump equals Tom Hanks.

### 7.3 Harry Potter- Harry Potter series (2001-2011)

#### Harry Potter and the Goblet of fire (2005)<sup>213</sup>

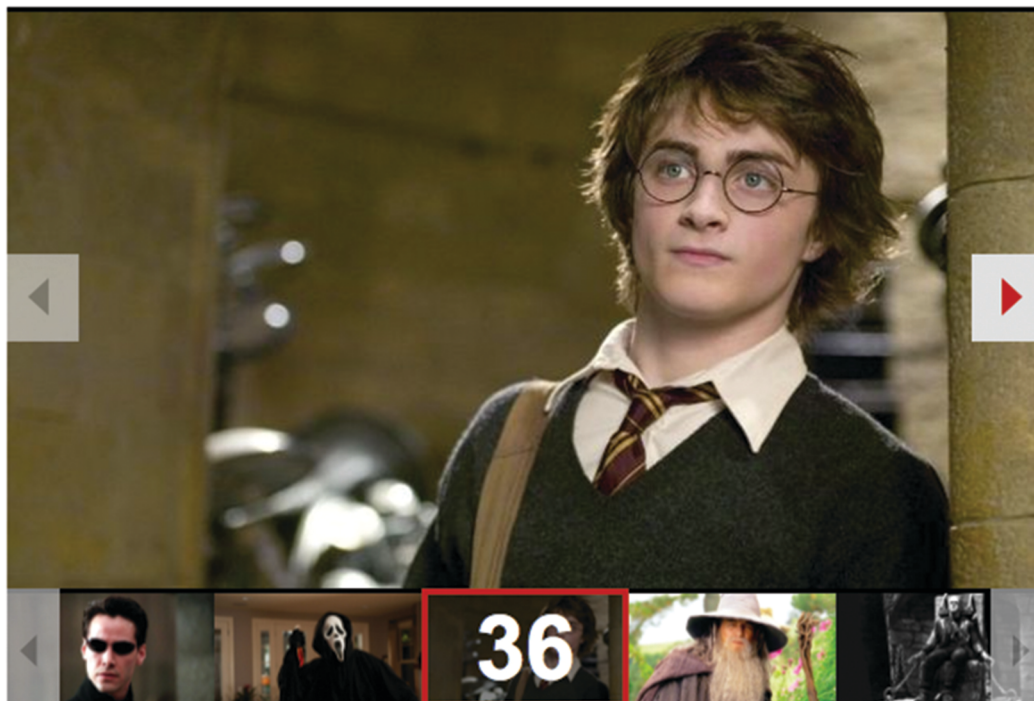
**Director:** Mike Newell

**Writers:** Steve Kloves (screenplay), J.K. Rowling (novel)

**Stars:** Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson and Rupert Grint

**Country of production:** UK/ USA

**Synopsis:** *Harry finds himself mysteriously selected as an under-aged competitor in a dangerous tournament between three schools of magic.*<sup>214</sup>



# 36

## Harry Potter - Harry Potter series (2001-2011)

**The Look:** Let's face it, if you were at Hogwarts and ended up anywhere other than Gryffindor, you'd be pretty annoyed. Daniel Radcliffe made the scarlet and gold colours of the UK's premier school of witchcraft and wizardry all his own as Harry Potter, even achieving the impossible and making school uniforms desirable. Magic.

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**Key Garment:** Harry wouldn't be the same slightly flawed hero without his glasses.

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Picture 3. The slide of Harry Potter and his iconic film costume. *I love magic.*

<sup>213</sup> I have chosen *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005) from the eight Harry Potter films, since the photograph in the slide is representing Harry in this particular film according to his age and appearance.

<sup>214</sup> Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

### 7.3.1 The iconic message of an image: The Five Codes

#### Actions and Hermeneutic code

Harry leans to the stone pillar of a corridor or room of considerable size. Behind him one can see unidentified metal objects. Image is a medium close up, where the focus is on the bust of Harry. Harry's gaze focuses on the event or person in front of him on the right side. Harry's expression is calm and thoughtful. As if he is wondering how to react to the situation in front of him or what does it mean. Harry has a school uniform with the gold-scarlet tie, round eyeglasses and khaki coloured shoulder bag. Harry looks to be in his early teens with his hair slightly overgrown.

#### Semes and their connotations

**round eyeglasses, metal** – intelligence, aid, geek

**a white shirt** –formality, business, conservatism, festivity,

**a button opened on a shirt** -casual, informal, relax

**a school uniform** – Great Britain, boarding school, conservatism, unity, hierarchy, seriousness, traditionalism, upper middle-classiness, discipline

**a V-neck pullover, dark grey** –warmness, cold surroundings, autumn-winter, casual

**a tie** -formality, business, conservatism, festivity, masculinity

**gold stripes on scarlet** –opposite colours, heraldry, team colours, colour code, gentlemen's club, warm colours

**a khaki coloured shoulder bag** – casual, adventure, man-purse, army, unisex

**overgrown; brown hair**- boyishness, messiness, casual, geekness

#### Symbolic codes and cultural codes of an image

The school uniform and its heraldry refer to the boarding school system of the Great Britain. Hogwarts, where Harry studies, is an ancient boarding school of Witchcraft and Wizardry with a long tradition of four different houses. By the castle looking surroundings one can assume that Harry is inside the school building. Numerous events of Harry Potter films happen in the school surroundings.

Harry belongs to the house of Gryffindor, whose livery colours he wears in his tie. Gold and scarlet are the main colours of Gryffindor herald and they symbolise the

house. Harry's dark grey pullover strengthens already strong gold and scarlet colour and V-neck makes a natural frame for the tie. Heraldry colours refer to the history knights, when every knight used their or their master's colours. Gold is the main metallic colour with silver in heraldry and it is associated with wealth and material prosperity.<sup>215</sup> Scarlet red refers to blood and it is the colour of kings in middle ages. Gold and red are the herald colours of the king Henry II.<sup>216</sup> Livery colours came to the ties in the English sporting clubs in 19<sup>th</sup> century, after they were to identify different jockeys in the horse races.<sup>217</sup> Griffin is an ancient imaginary beast that has a head, wings and claws of an eagle and body of a lion. It symbolises the qualities of watchfulness and courage.<sup>218</sup> Harry's tie has a strong allusion to the Great Britain and its history.

Harry has a school uniform that has more relax look with the pullover that it would be with the uniform's blazer. School uniforms are part of pedagogic approach especially in the cultures of Anglo-Saxon heritage, which brought military and totalitarian traditions to school uniforms. Craik sees that school uniform has connotations of discipline, authority, order, distinctiveness, role models, gender training, performativity, even sensuality or perversion. The school uniform has behavioural codes of how to wear it and there will be discipline from misuse.<sup>219</sup> But Harry in the image certainly misuses his costume by wearing it in a relaxed way.

Harry's appearance indicates to his lack of manner and style needed in a boarding school. He has not even buttoned his shirt properly. Harry's round spectacles refer to certain geekness in him, since round spectacles are often related to intelligent, but not stylish people. Only now round spectacles have come back to fashion among trendy people. With the messiness of his hair Harry doesn't fit perfectly to the upper middle-class school surroundings he is in. In boarding schools there are normally strict rules about the hair, like the rule that boys hair must be above the collar.<sup>220</sup> Harry's look is

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<sup>215</sup> Lurie 2000, 197

<sup>216</sup> Kay-Williams 2013, 48, 50

<sup>217</sup> Hart 1998, 58

<sup>218</sup> Hall 1996, 143 Griffin

<sup>219</sup> Craik 2005, 52

<sup>220</sup> Craik 2005, 54

breaking these rules. We can't know if he is doing it on purpose as an act of teenage rebellion or he just simply ignore rules.

Harry looks ordinary, not especially wealthy boy, who just happens to be the most famous wizard of his age. Harry tries to hide his famous scar with his long hair. By this he tries not to be recognised as *a boy who lived*, but as a normal person. His appearance gives a way that a very normal person can be a hero too, a knight who looks perfectly ordinary.

### 7.3.2 The linguistic message

#### The Look

*Let's face it, if you were at Hogwarts and ended up anywhere other than Gryffindor, you'd be pretty annoyed.*

- The author refers to the notion that Harry's house Gryffindor is the most central house in Harry Potter films. Gryffindor is the rival of the house of Slytherin, from where Harry's enemy Voldemort has come from. Gryffindor is the house of heroes.

*Daniel Radcliffe made the scarlet and gold colours - - all his own as Harry Potter --*

- Author seems to refer by this metaphor that the actor Daniel Radcliffe has earned the famous colours of Harry Potter by playing his character convincingly.

*-- even achieving the impossible and making school uniforms desirable. Magic.*

- Before the Harry Potter books and films, British boarding schools had a bad reputation by choosing noble or upper middle-class pupils and isolating them from the real world. Harry Potter series have raised the reputation, since Hogwarts accepts all kinds of pupils, such as orphan Harry and it is the place where studying can be magical. By the notion *Magic* the author means that it is difficult to look cool in a school uniform. Harry's character succeeds in it.

## **Key Garment**

*Harry wouldn't be the same slightly flawed hero without his glasses.*

- A hero has always some weakness and Harry's is his bad eyesight. Spectators are not used to see a hero in eyeglasses. The Superman has eyeglasses, but only when he is disguised as a Clark Kent, when he aims to look everyday man. Round eyeglasses have also been a sign of slight geekness, which doesn't help to build an image of a convincing hero. Despite that the eyeglasses make Harry look common and easy to adapt to.

### **7.3.3 The cultural message of Harry Potter: Hero of Teenage**

#### **Resistance**

The linguistic message of Harry Potter focuses on the notion that good hero can make a school uniform look cool, which it is not in the everyday context. With the refer to Harry's spectacles the author refers that a hero is not a hero without some flaws. Harry's house signs in his tie have noticeable symbolism to the era of knighthood and courage as its virtue. Harry is this kind of modern knight who has magic of Merlin. Harry's appearance is supported by his ordinary British name, although it refers to the name Henry<sup>221</sup>, which many of British kings have had.

Harry has a contradiction in his costume: strict school uniform with the messy look. The dualism in the Harry's costume is the fight between rule obeying schoolboy and rule ignoring teenage boy. He has an appearance of a normal teenage boy, with a modest refer to an unfashionable person. Yet Harry is very famous and respected by the others. His appearance encourages that a normal person can do big things. His costume supports the two opposite ideas of geekness and the qualities of a knight: watchfulness and courage. Harry is a hero in who the magial and ordinary are united.

Harry is a representation of the teenage hero in who the resistance to the unjust rules is strong. Wizard world is new to Harry and he observes it with a critical eye. Harry's costume includes the two opposite forces of vulnerability and courage that we all have

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<sup>221</sup> Henry VII

in us. Costume supports the Harry's character well and the spectator can identify himself closely with him.

#### 7.4 Three iconic characters and Lotman's icon

Lotman sees an iconic sign to be descriptive, where only one expression fits to it. It describes some object or refers to it. Drawing and photograph are descriptive signs.<sup>222</sup> Since Lotman thinks that the photograph is the most descriptive sign, film costumes are very iconic signs, because spectators see them only through the medium of film or photographs. Because the aim of the iconic sign is to portray something, the fedora hat of Indiana Jones is not seen just as one fedora hat, but as the iconic sign of all fedora hats. Harry's tie is the iconic sign of the livery coloured ties and their cultural history of sport clubs, boarding schools and knights. Forrets' gingham style shirt abstracts the rural small town life of the southern USA. Therefore all the costumes seen on films are signs, but they are iconic signs when they create an allegory, metaphor or symbol. Three film costumes are motivated because the photograph is limiting them and turns them into descriptive signs.

Since the three iconic costumes have the power of describing, they are connected with different cultural contexts: release date, time when film is viewed and spectator's own cultural context. The decade between each film shows the change in heroic characters of Hollywood films. The tough hero of the 80's, seen in Indiana Jones, has changed to more gentle one in the 90's honest Forrest Gump and then to more younger one in the 21<sup>st</sup> century teenage hero of Harry Potter. Forrest and Harry show that the trend of portraying a hero in films has gone to more realistic characters to who it is easier to identify oneself. Since I am a member of western culture a good deal of signs was easy to interpret. Therefore they didn't felt iconic until after the analysis.

Lotman sees an iconic sign as concrete of an abstraction.<sup>223</sup> The film costume of Indiana Jones concretizes the abstract word *adventure*. Indiana is an archetype of an adventure hero with the symbolism to the history of war, archaeology, colonialism

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<sup>222</sup> Lotman 1989, 12-16, 46

<sup>223</sup> Lotman 1989, 50



and the time of explorers. The same abstraction in the Forrest Gump's costume is shown with the linguistic reference to his well-worn trainers, which symbolise his long journey as an adventure. With the signs of his costume, Forrest is an abstraction of a modest hero. The heroism in Harry Potter's costume is seen as a metaphor of modern day's knight with the value that sees one's principles more important than the rules for the sake of rules. The iconicity in film costumes is therefore seen as an abstract idea that is produced by the means of film information. The abstraction is seen when the costume is put into cultural contexts and paralleled with other film costumes. Lotman sees that semantics of a picture is not only the sum of meanings of the objects, but one sees the meaning by studying the connecting and dividing elements.<sup>224</sup> In this analysis I paralleled the three costumes between each other to find similarities and differences. What makes these three very different characters and their costumes similar is their different ways to portray the most archetypical character of the film stories – a hero. They are very different kinds of heroes, but what makes these ones similar is that they all have certain values, which their costumes conveys: Indiana – *history has to be explored*, Forrest – *one should be modest* and Harry – *one shouldn't see rules as a truth*.

When I analysed the signs of the three costumes, the objects in them became full of meanings when the interpretation went further and they started to have unexpected connotations to the history, traditions and symbolism. The framing of photographs together with the linguistic message directed my way to which details to focus on and interpret. The iconic value of a film costume is best seen from the film, but it can be seen from the photograph with the systematic analysis as well. Therefore in my opinion it is possible to grasp film information from a film costume by using photographs, even though the information is not as complete as it is in the film. In the case of a photograph, film costume can be seen as its own unit, but the deep language of it will not open properly if one has not seen the film.

From the analysis emerged the notion that all the three film costumes had dualism in them. Indiana's look is a mix of professor-ranger, Forrest connects the rural modesty to military look and in Harry's appearance one can see the conflict between the rule-

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<sup>224</sup> Lotman 1989, 64

obeying schoolboy and critical teenager. The dualism is similar with the character of Charles Chaplin and it makes the costume unpredictable.<sup>225</sup> The unexpectedness in film costume is the essence of conflict of the artistic communication in film. Metaphors and symbols in the costume of Indiana Jones create together an allegory of an archaeologist with the twist of fiction, where everything is possible: an archaeologist who can be a soldier-ranger at the same time. It refers to Indiana's two alter egos of a professor and a ranger. All three costumes had references to the European or North American cultural contexts. The signs of western culture look comprehensible for me, but they could be difficult to open for the members of other cultures.

A spectator gets information from the costume and character mainly as a one unit, even though he would focus on the different details. The interrelationship between the costume and the character is united, since the costume makes the character as much as the character makes the costume. Costume can be the starting point for the actor to build his character, but in the end it is the actor who makes the costume alive. The creation of character and costume is not a linear process and therefore a spectator can't divide it in such way either. Spectator sees the costume as a personal apparel and equipment of the character, which refers to his persona. Spectator doesn't see the costume as its own unit, but as a part of the character, film and its means.

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<sup>225</sup> Lotman 1989, 56-58, 62 on Mukařovský

## 8 Conclusions and reflections

This research has shown that it is possible to find the iconic aspects of the film costume from the semiotic point of view. The iconicity of the film costume is its ability to change the character's garments into meaningful and important signs for a spectator. With the importance I mean the way the spectator takes the character and his costume as his own, when the costume becomes his favourite one. The sign language of the costume has a meaning to the spectator. Also the sign language of film costume is open for the spectator, who doesn't interpret it in a professional way like it is done in this thesis, but to whom the symbolism is understandable in his culture. This is more likely the reason why the feature *50 Most Iconic Movie Looks. Cinema's sartorial trendsetters and their signature outfits*<sup>226</sup> of the British website listed mostly Hollywood films.

According to this research there are no certain elements, which would make a film costume iconic. It is the interrelationship between the elements that makes the iconicity of the costume. In the three costumes the dualism that creates a contradiction, makes the costumes more interesting and therefore more likely iconic. The analysis showed certain similarities between the film costumes and Lotman's definition of an icon. To find a convincing pattern, more research should be done with a bigger sample. This research can't either answer to the question which film costume is more iconic than the other, since it is a subjective issue. The aim was to find connection between the film costumes and the semiotic theory of icon. Different theories could give different answers to the research question, since semiotics is only one way to see the same film costume. The costume stays as a costume, but the angle it is seen from is different in each theory.

This study has showed that in this case a film costume must be seen as one with the character, since the spectator don't divide them into two different units. With this research it can't be seen if the costume supports the character's iconicity or the character supports costume's iconicity. I don't see the issue important since character and his costume are in symbiosis from the spectator's point of view.

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<sup>226</sup> Power July 31st 2012

My interpretation of the three film costumes is subjective and some other would possibly have focused on other aspects. Nevertheless the linguistic message of the slide led my interpretation to focus on certain objects in the photograph. The multimodal media of the slide controlled my focus to the aspects the author had written open. With the notion that I am a member of a western culture and the signs of these film costumes were comprehensible for me, the analysis can tell something about shared cultural context of Hollywood films.

To make the results more reliable, more costumes should be analysed to have a bigger sample. Therefore the study of iconic costumes could be continued. The future study could be connected to the new themes, like the connection of iconic film costumes with the phenomenon of stardom or the development of the film character. The problematic relation of the character and his costume is like *which came first, the chicken or the egg?* In this research it looked like a circular argument, but it is not sure until more study would be taken. The more further my thesis went the more I would have liked to link it with Dyer's theory of stardom and what place an iconic film costume has in it. This could be good the topic for the future research.

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## **Pictures and Tables**

**Picture 1.** The slide of Indiana Jones and his iconic film costume. *I'm gonna blow up the Ark, Rene.*

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**Picture 2.** The slide of Forrest Gump and his iconic film costume. *Hello. My name's Forrest, Forrest Gump. You want a chocolate?*

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**Picture 3.** The slide of Harry Potter and his iconic film costume. *I love magic.*

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**Table 1.** *Signs by Lotman.* Lotman, Juri, 1989. *Merkkien maailma. Kirjoitelmia semiotiikasta.* Helsinki: SN –kirjat. p.12-16, modified by Annila 2014